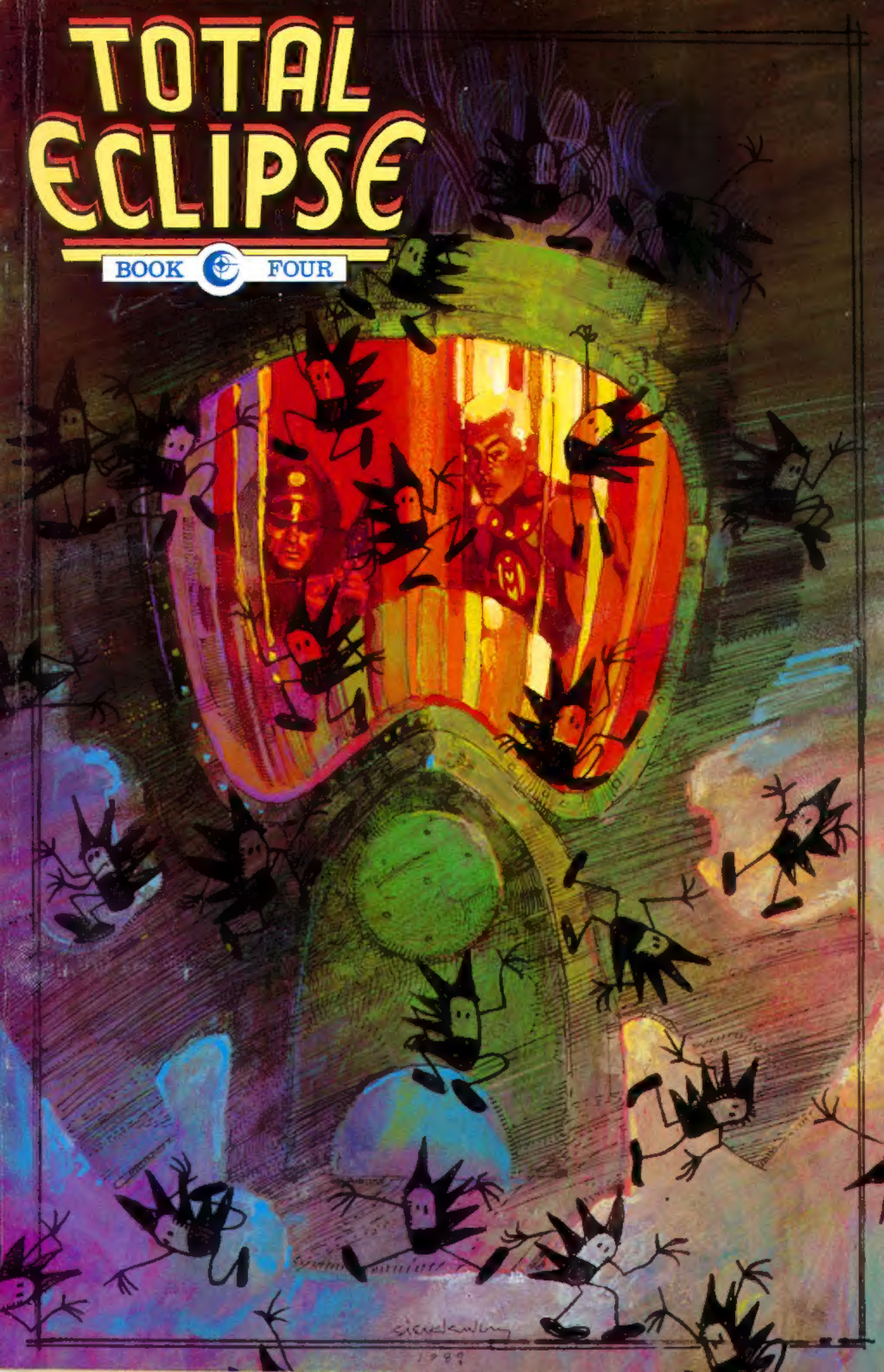


TOTAL ECLIPSE

BOOK



FOUR



Stenciled by

1989

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The logo features the words "TOTAL ECLIPSE" in a bold, stylized, yellow font with red outlines and a 3D effect. The text is centered within a white circle. The background consists of a large yellow sun partially obscured by a black shadow on the left side. A smaller yellow circle is visible to the right of the main circle.

TOTAL ECLIPSE

TM




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HIS NAME IS
ZZED,
AND FOR MORE
THAN THIRTY
THOUSAND YEARS
HE HAS DESPER-
ATELY WISHED
HE COULD DIE.

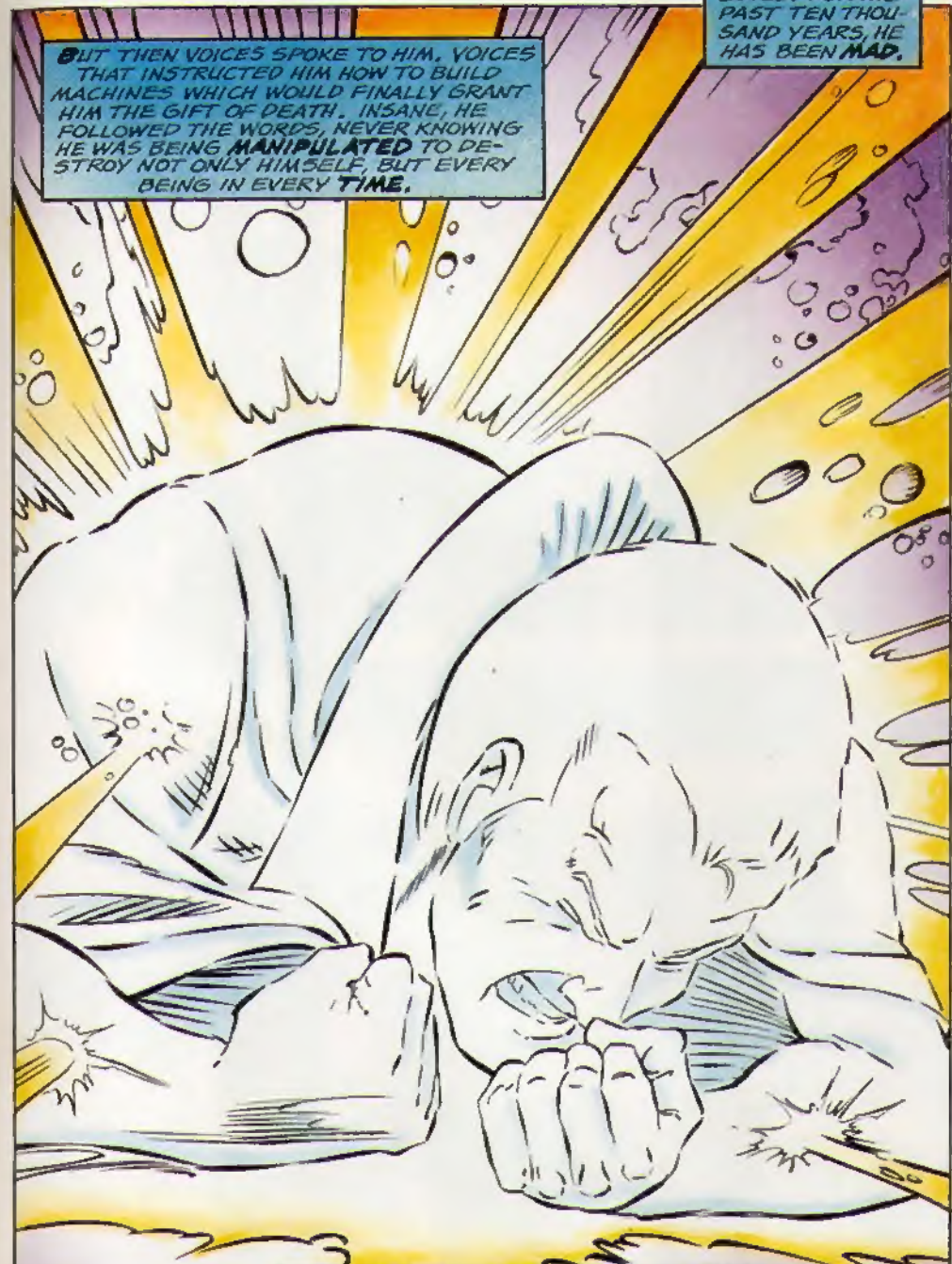
HE HAS BEEN
CURSED WITH
IMMORTALITY. HE
HAS SUFFERED
THE DEATHS OF
EVERY MAN AND
WOMAN HE HAS
EVER KNOWN OR
LOVED. FOR THE
PAST TEN THOU-
SAND YEARS, HE
HAS BEEN **MAD**.

BUT THEN VOICES SPOKE TO HIM, VOICES
THAT INSTRUCTED HIM HOW TO BUILD
MACHINES WHICH WOULD FINALLY GRANT
HIM THE GIFT OF DEATH. INSANE, HE
FOLLOWED THE WORDS, NEVER KNOWING
HE WAS BEING **MANIPULATED** TO DE-
STROY NOT ONLY HIMSELF, BUT EVERY
BEING IN EVERY **TIME**.



AND HE
RISES FROM
HIS BODY--
A THING OF
REBORN
SPIRIT--
SEEKING
KNOWLEDGE.
AND HE
TRAVERSES
THE PLANES
OF REALITY
AS EASILY
HE SOARS
THE INFI-
NITE COSMOS.

HE IS NOW
FREE OF ALL
RESTRAINTS
AS NO OTHER
MAN HAS
EVER BEEN
BEFORE.

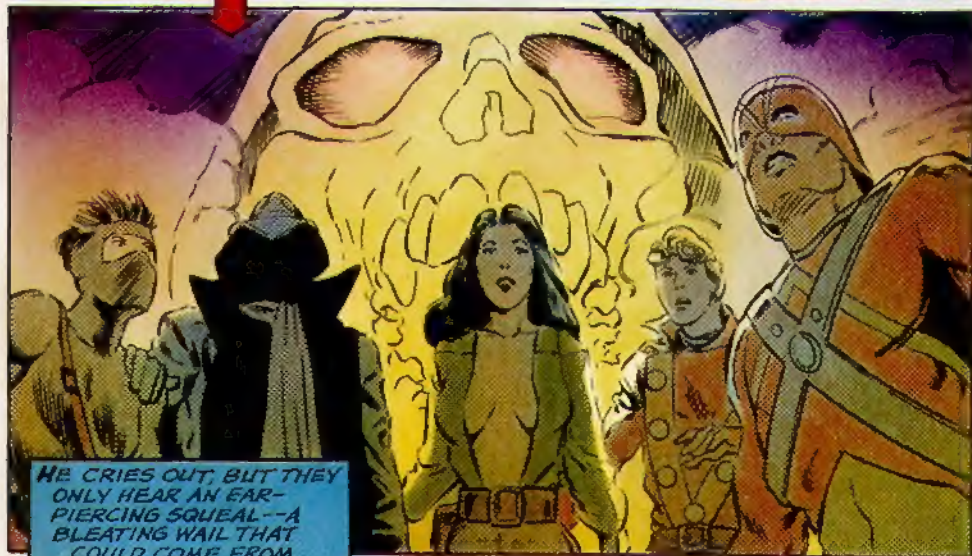


THEN, AT LAST, AT THE MOMENT OF SEEMING
TRIUMPH, ANOTHER INTERFERED. ANOTHER
WHO WAS STRUCK BY THE LIGHT WHICH WAS
SUPPOSED TO DESTROY ZZED. ANOTHER WHO
TOOK THE **BRUNT** OF THE ENERGY AND DIS-
APPEARED WITHIN, LETTING ONLY A **FRACTION**
SLIP PAST HIM TO BATHE THE IMMORTAL IN
A RAY WHICH WOULD NOT KILL HIM, BUT
ALTER HIM FOREVER.



ZED'S BODY STRUGGLES IN RESISTANCE AS HIS SOUL IS WRNCHED FREE FROM HIS FLESH. HE COLLAPSES IN EVER-INCREASING PAIN AS THE LIGHT WORMS ITS WAY THROUGH HIS EVERY ATOM.

HE IS ALIVE HERE IN THE INFINITE, ALIVE, QUESTIONING, WORLDS AND LIVES STROBE PAST HIM, FLICKERING THOUGHTS AND CONCEPTS PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO THINGS OF FLESH THAT HE INGESTS WITH HUNGERING FEROCITY.



HE CRIES OUT, BUT THEY ONLY HEAR AN EAR-PIERCING SQUEAL--A BLEATING WAIL THAT COULD COME FROM NO HUMAN THROAT.

AND THEY STARE IN TWISTED FASCINATION AND VOYEURISTIC HORROR AS ZED'S BODY IS LITERALLY TORN APART FROM WITHIN.

BLOOD GUSHES FROM HIS EYES AND EARS AND FINGERNAILS, THEN HIS CHEST SPLITS AND CARTILAGE CUTS HIS FLESH INTO MEATY RIBBONS.



HIS FACE PEELS BACK INTO A GRINNING SCARLET-DRENCHED SKULL WHICH THROBS AND EXPLODES.



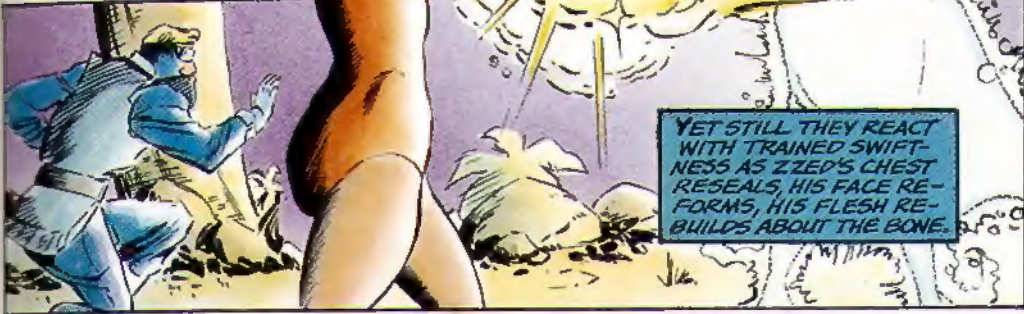
AND SOME STILL CAN NOT AVERT THEIR GAZE--REPULED AND YET DRAWN TO THIS SCENE OF HUMAN DEVIATION.



HE IS ALIVE AS NO OTHER MAN HAS EVER BEEN BEFORE.



THEIR FRIEND IS GONE,
LOST TO THE LIGHT
WHICH ZZED HAD
SUMMONED FOR HIM-
SELF. TACHYON IS
DEAD, THEY BELIEVE,
AND THOUGH HE STILL
LIVES, PUSHED THROUGH
SPACE TO ANOTHER
WORLD, THEIR GRIEF
AND PAIN IS ALL
TOO AGONIZING.



YET STILL THEY REACT
WITH TRAINED SWIFT-
NESS AS ZZED'S CHEST
REVEALS, HIS FACE RE-
FORMS, HIS FLESH RE-
BUILDS ABOUT THE BONE.



THEY MOVE TO PULL
HIM FROM THE LIGHT...



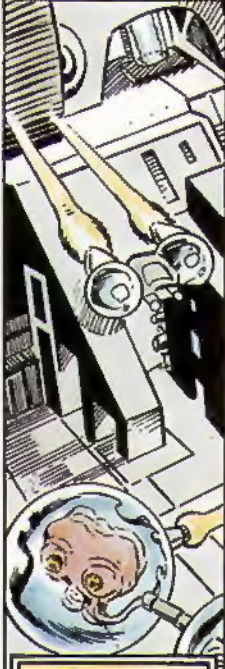
... BUT THEY FAIL.

THERE ARE
WORLDS HERE
WHERE LIFE
EXISTS IN
DEGREES, OR
INTENSITIES.
WORLDS WITH
CONCEPTS
THAT ARE
MEASURES
OF SOUND
OR LIGHT.
WORLDS THAT
BREATHE AND
WORLDS THAT
NO LONGER
CAN, AND
HE GREEDILY
MAKES THEM
HIS...



ALL THEY CAN DO IS HELPLESSLY WATCH
AS THE LIGHT PULSES WITH LINEARTHLY
INTENSITY AND COLOR. AS ZZED'S BODY
GROWS AND CHANGES, AND THEN RISES
WITH NEW LIFE.

AND THEN THE
LIGHT FADES.



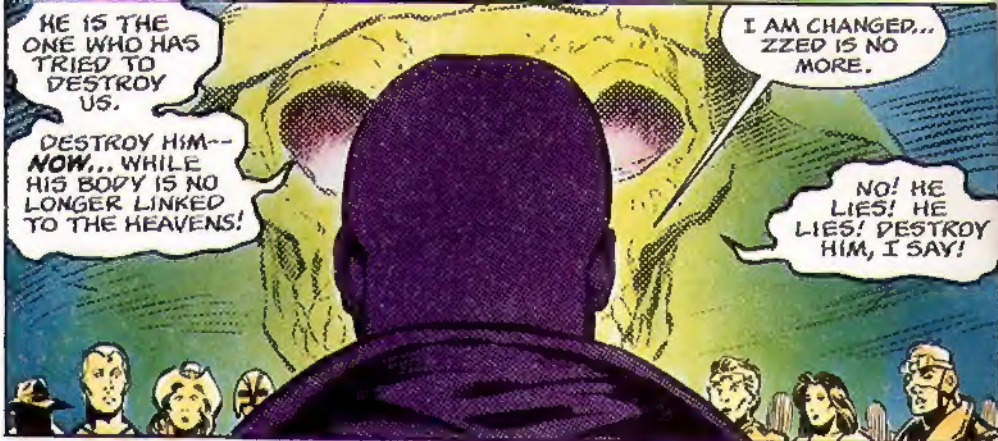
HE SEES
AND LEARNS
AS NO OTHER
MAN HAS
EVER BEFORE.

HE IS THE
ONE WHO HAS
TRIED TO
DESTROY
US.

DESTROY HIM--
NOW... WHILE
HIS BODY IS NO
LONGER LINKED
TO THE HEAVENS!

I AM CHANGED...
ZZED IS NO
MORE.

NO! HE
LIES! HE
LIES! DESTROY
HIM, I SAY!



HE **IS** DIFFERENT...
HIS EYES...SO
DEEP...

IT'S
LIKE
HE'S SEEN
GOD,

OR THE
DEVIL IN
HELL.



HIS SOUL
RETURNS AS
HIS FLESH
IS REBUILT.
THE MAN WHO
HAS LIVED
FOREVER
HAS NOW
SEEN ALL
THAT IS AND
WAS. HE
HAS PLAYED
THROUGHOUT
THE
UNIVERSE.

ZZED IS
FINALLY
SATED.

AND
HOME
AWAITS.

YOU FOOLS--I'VE LED
YOU THIS FAR AND NOW
YOU IGNORE ME? KILL
HIM WHILE YOU HAVE
THE CHANCE, OR
YOU WILL ALL
DIE BECAUSE
OF YOUR OWN
STUPIDITY!

ZZED
IS GONE--
HE EXISTS
NO MORE.

THE
CHANGE
MUST BE
COMPLETE!

ALL
MUST BE
NEW!



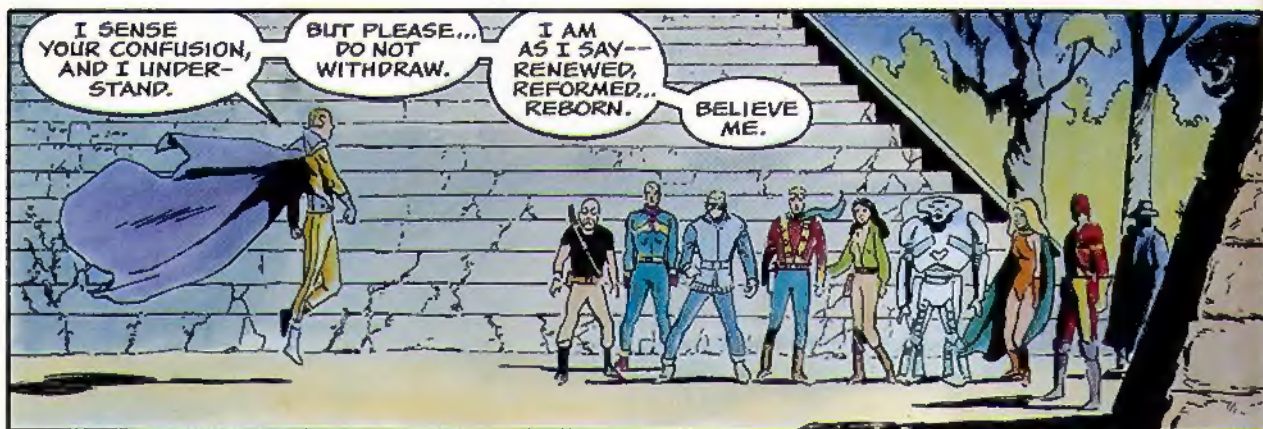
A-ACE--
WHAT DO
WE DO?

GOD,
I WISH I
KNEW.

THIS IS...

REBIRTH!





I SENSE
YOUR CONFUSION,
AND I UNDER-
STAND.

BUT PLEASE...
DO NOT
WITHDRAW.

I AM
AS I SAY--
RENEWED,
REFORMED...
REBORN.

BELIEVE
ME.



IN YOU I SENSE
TURMOIL--A FREE
SOUL DARKENED
WITH CHANGE...

WHAT
I WAS NO
LONGER
MATTERS.

PERHAPS.



AND YOU,
DAVID
NELSON--

HOLD IT
RIGHT THERE,
GLOW-EYES.

YOU AIN'T
GETTIN' NEAR
HIM.



I MEAN
HIM NO
HARM.

Holy SHEEEEE



THE CHANGE
IN ME IS COMPLETE.
ZZED DOES NOT
EXIST. EVERY
FIBER OF MY
BEING HAS BEEN
ALTERED
AND IS NEW.



THE UNIVERSE HAS
HUMBLED ME, DAVID.
IT HAS SHOWN ME THINGS
BEYOND COMPREHENSION.
IT HAS SHOWN ME
TRUTHS THAT MAKE
ME WEAK WITH
GRIEF.

ONCE I WAS **IMMORTAL**
AND BELIEVED **NOTHING**
COULD HURT ME. NOW I
AM ALL-TOO MORTAL,
AND I SEE WHAT A
FOOL I WAS.

DAVID, WHAT I DID
TO YOU...AND TO YOUR FATHER...
NOW REPULSES ME. MY DEEDS
WERE UNFORGIVEABLE. NO
APOLOGY ADEQUATE.

ALLOW ME
TO COMPENSATE...
...ANY WAY
I CAN.



I CAN SHOW YOU THE WONDERS OF
THE UNIVERSE. I CAN TOUCH YOU
AND CURE ALL ILLNESSES AND PAIN.
I CAN SHOW YOU YOUR FATHER...

...PLEASE,
DAVID-- LET ME
ATONE FOR MY
MISDEEDS.

N-NO...
I CAN'T...
I CAN'T.

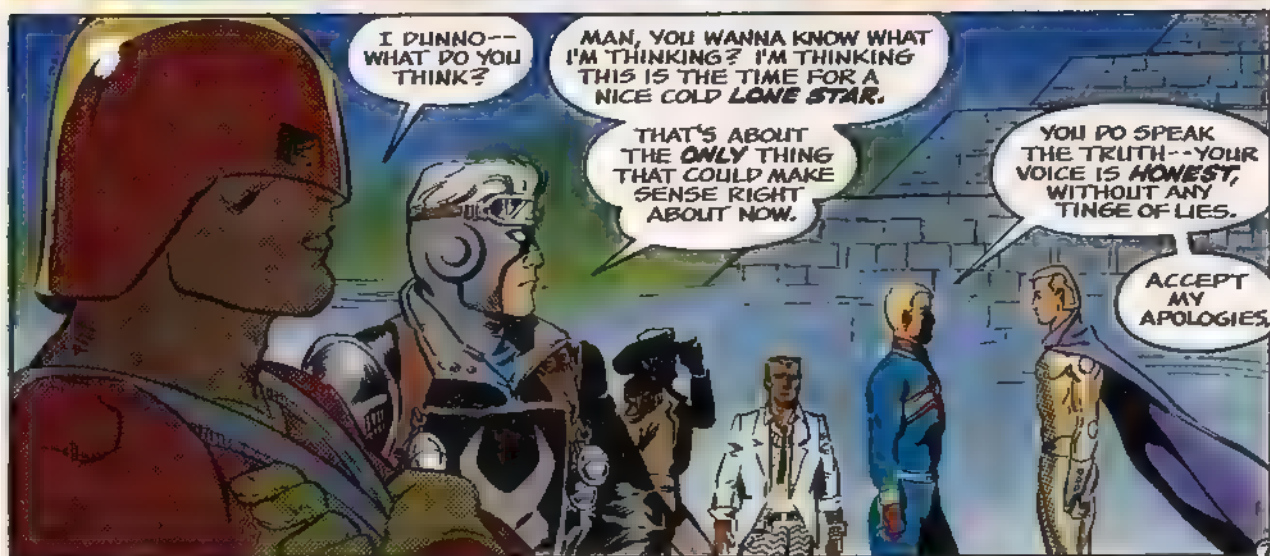
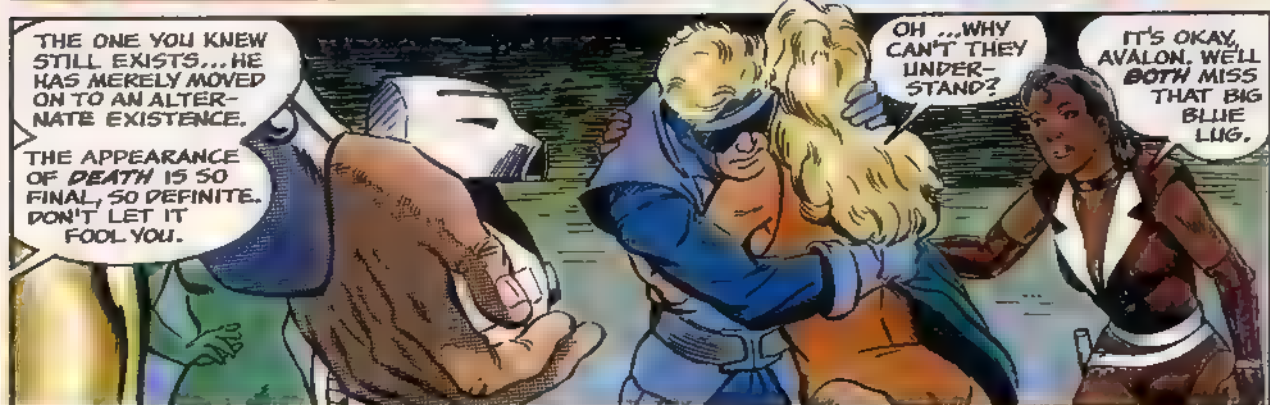
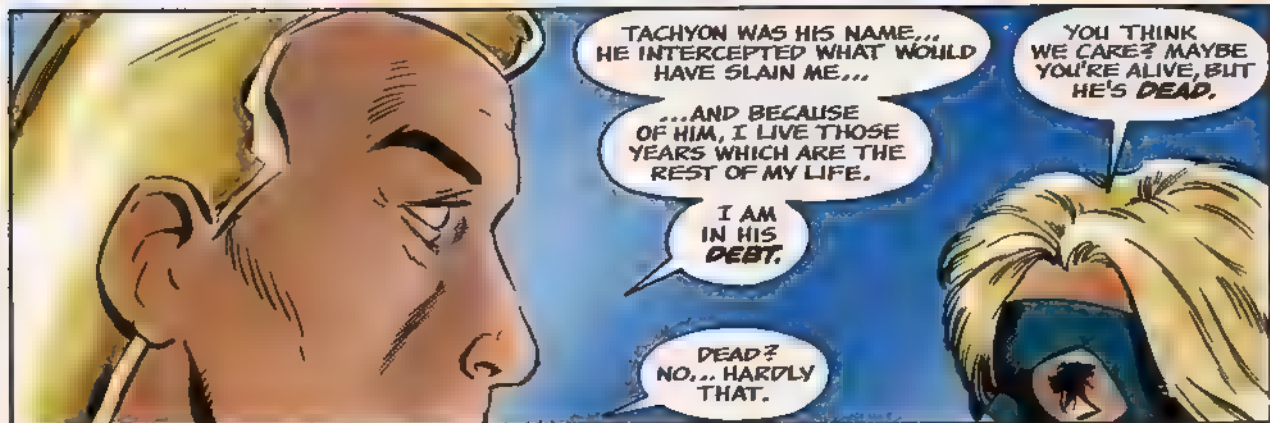
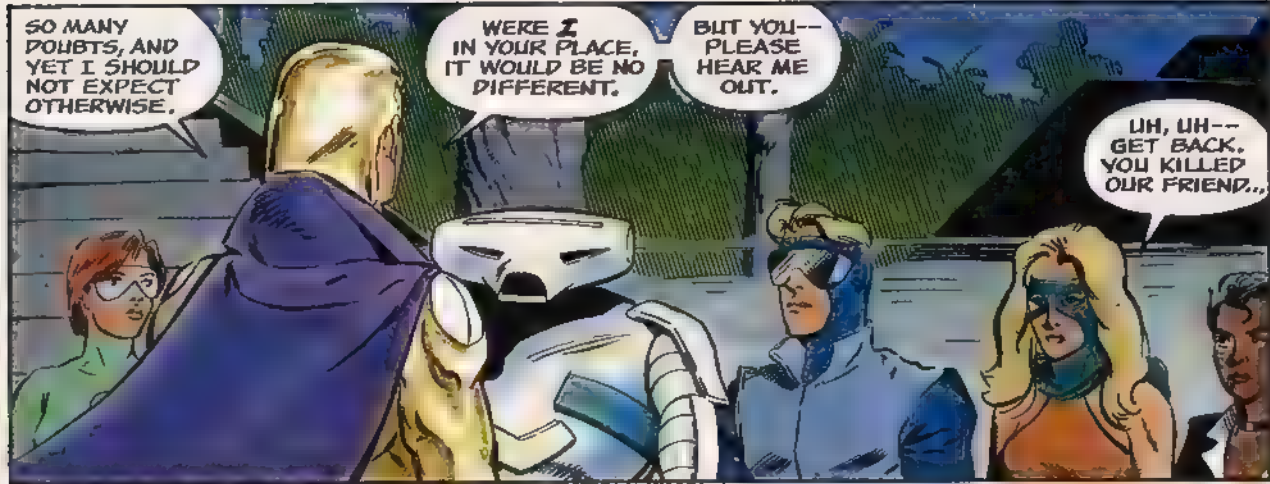


YOU
MUST.



I DUNNO--HOW
DO WE KNOW HE
ISN'T PLAYING
GAMES? HE
COULD TURN
AROUND AND
ZAP US.

IF HE WANTED
TO DESTROY US,
SOMETHING TELLS
ME IT WOULDN'T BE
MUCH OF A PROBLEM.





I SAW THE FUTURE, IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT. LIKE THE IMAGE ONE SEES FROM THE CORNER OF ONE'S EYE.

DO YOU WISH TO KNOW YOUR FATE?

NO-- I PREFER TO DEAL WITH IT AS IT COMES.

AS YOU WISH.

MY FRIENDS, WHAT **ALTERED** ME FROM THE MADMAN ZED-- BEING STILL LIVES...

...AND HE STILL **THREATENS** OUR VERY EXISTENCE.

WE MUST ACT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

HEY, WHO DIED AND MADE YOU BOSS?

GREAT. JUST WHAT WE NEED. ANOTHER ANAL RETENTIVE SUPERHERO TYPE.

SO WOTTA YOU GONNA CALL YOURSELF, HOT-SHOT? CAPTAIN BLANK EYES? MAJOR WONDERFUL? HOWZABOUT PRIVATE PERFECT PERSON.

MAN, I TELL YA--THIS SUPERHERO NAME CRAP MAKES ME **SICK**.

WE GONNA SAVE THE UNIVERSE --OR SET UP SOME LOUSY 900 NUMBER FOR KIDS TO DECIDE WHAT TO CALL YOU?

WAIT-- I KNOW...

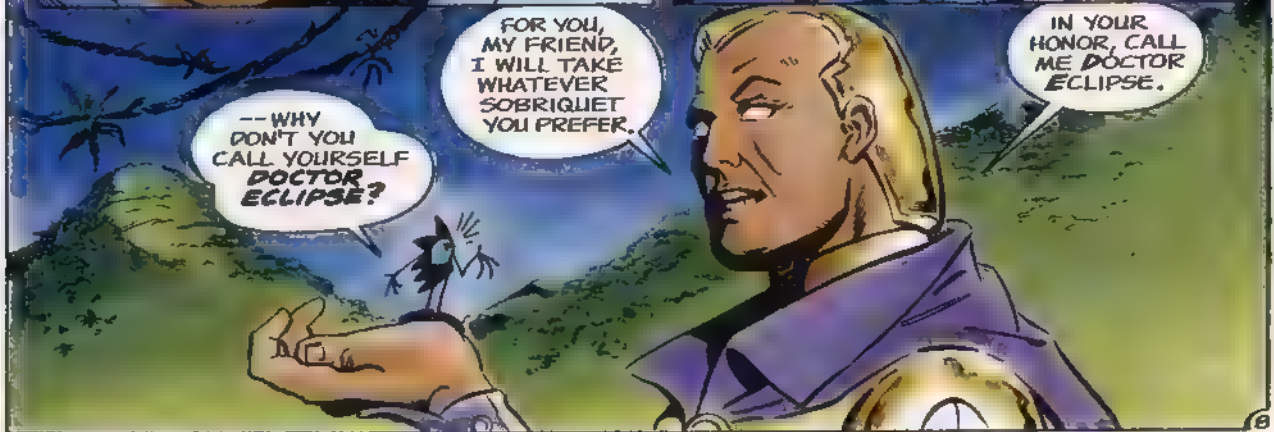
BECAUSE I WANT HIM TO **HEAL** MY SPECIAL FRIEND WHO IS **DARK** BECAUSE OF THE ECLIPSE--

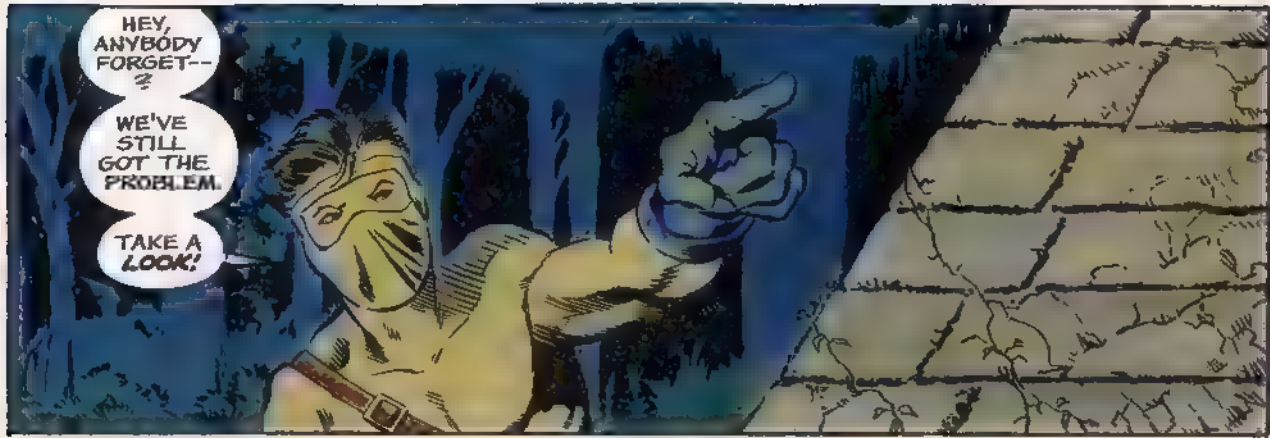


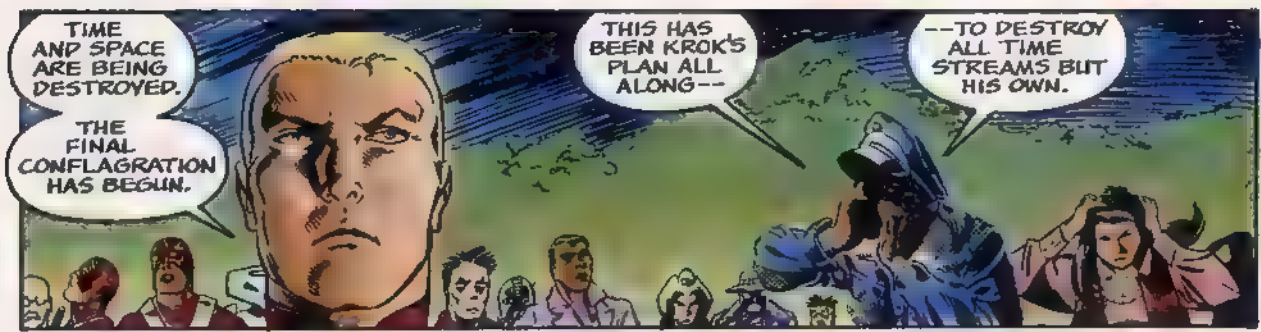
-- WHY DON'T YOU CALL YOURSELF **DOCTOR ECLIPSE**?

FOR YOU, MY FRIEND, I WILL TAKE WHATEVER SOBRIQUET YOU PREFER.

IN YOUR HONOR, CALL ME **DOCTOR ECLIPSE**.





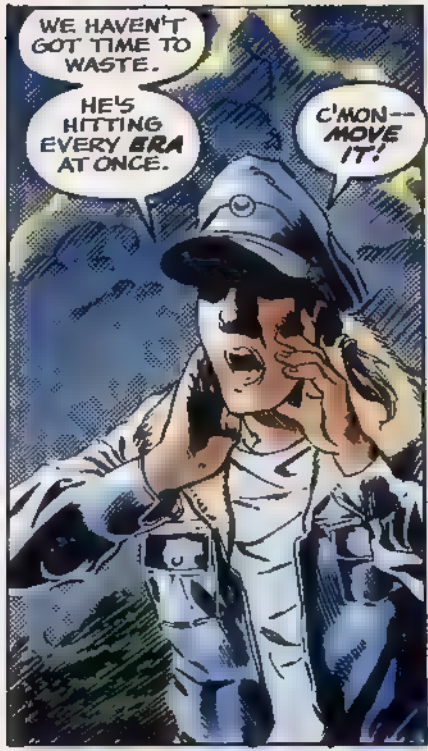


TIME
AND SPACE
ARE BEING
DESTROYED.

THE
FINAL
CONFLAGRATION
HAS BEGUN.

THIS HAS
BEEN KROK'S
PLAN ALL
ALONG--

--TO DESTROY
ALL TIME
STREAMS BUT
HIS OWN.



WE HAVEN'T
GOT TIME TO
WASTE.

HE'S
HITTING
EVERY ERA
AT ONCE.

C'MON--
MOVE
IT!



THEN
COME WITH
ME...

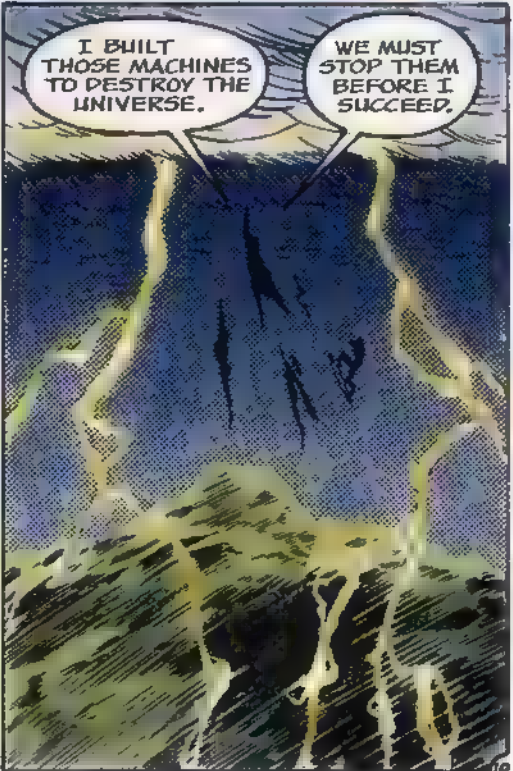
...OUR
COMBINED
POWER IS
WHAT IS
NEEDED
NOW.



WE MUST **STOP**
THE VERY FORCES
WHICH I, IN MY
FORMER EXISTENCE,
BEGAN.

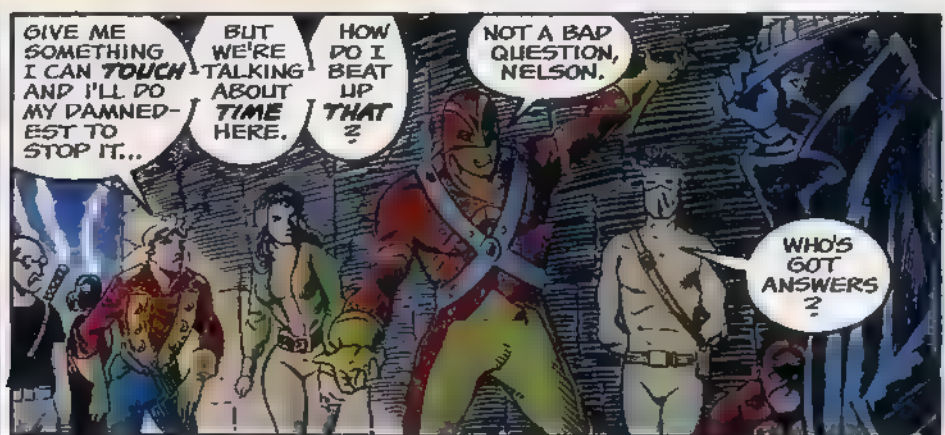
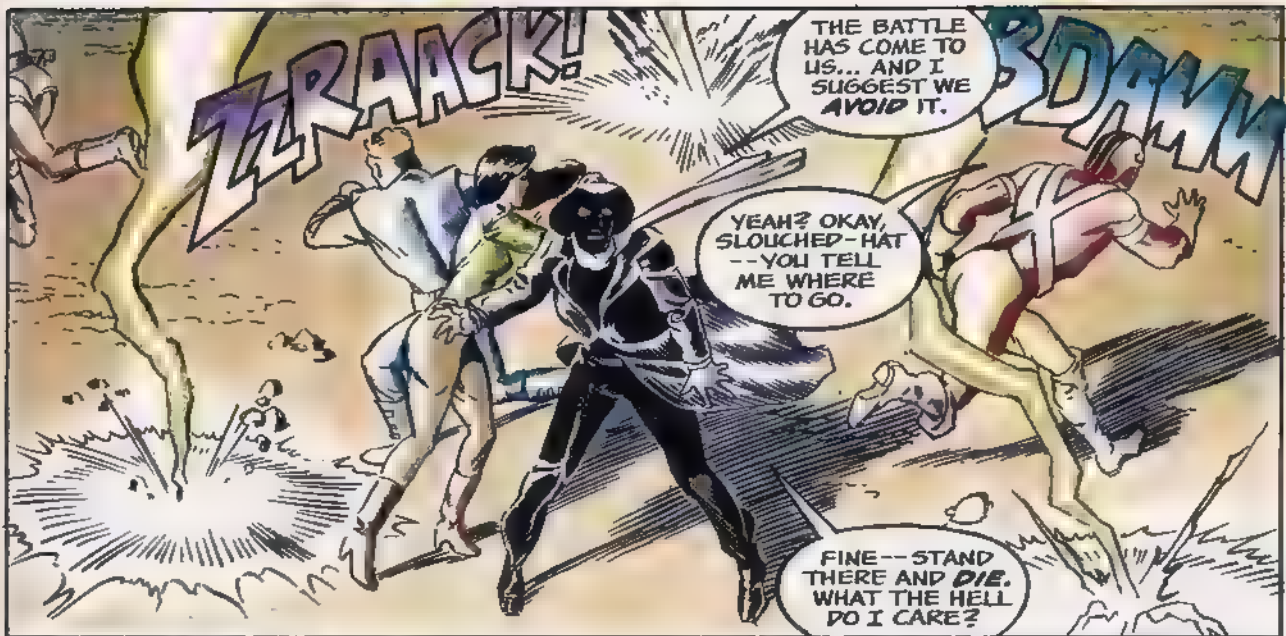
I WAS A **FOOL**
TO HAVE BELIEVED
THE VOICES... TO
THINK I WAS LEP
ABOUT SO EASILY.

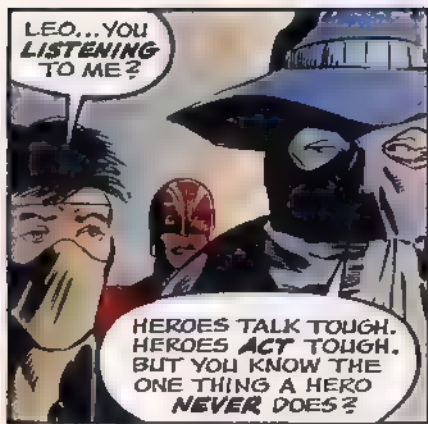
...SO
CONVINCED
OF MY
PURPOSE.



I BUILT
THOSE MACHINES
TO DESTROY THE
UNIVERSE.

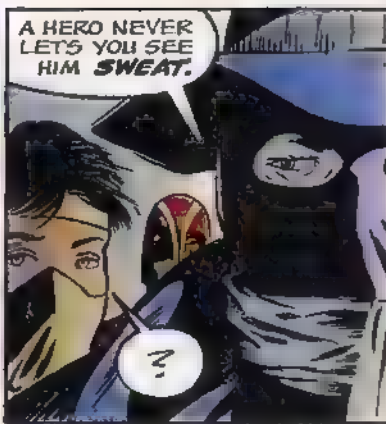
WE MUST
STOP THEM
BEFORE I
SUCCEED.





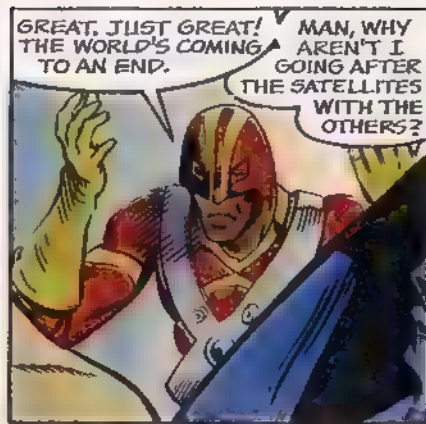
LEO...YOU LISTENING TO ME?

HEROES TALK TOUGH. HEROES **ACT** TOUGH. BUT YOU KNOW THE ONE THING A HERO NEVER DOES?



A HERO NEVER LETS YOU SEE HIM **SWEAT**.

?

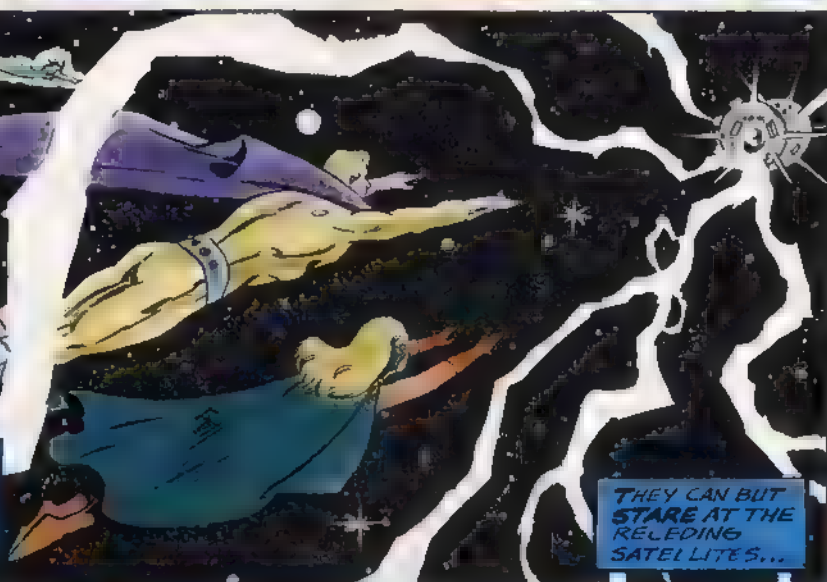


GREAT. JUST GREAT! THE WORLD'S COMING TO AN END.

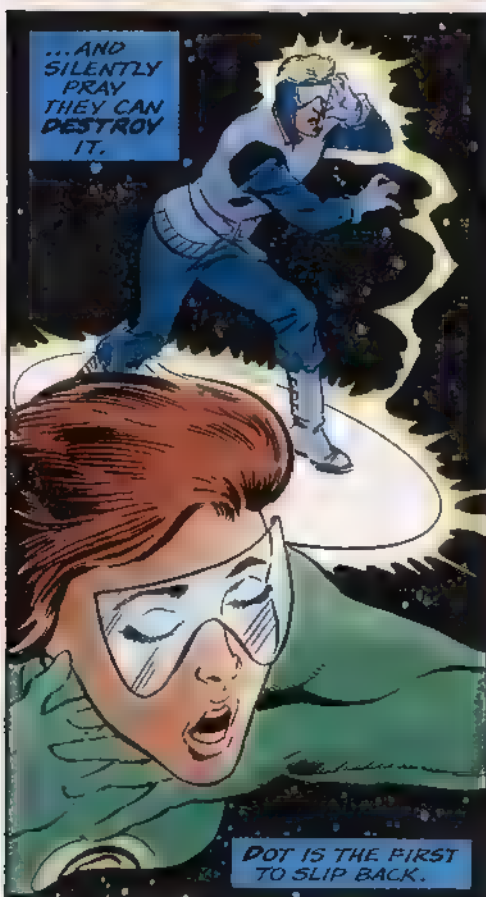
MAN, WHY AREN'T I GOING AFTER THE SATELLITES WITH THE OTHERS?



IN THE VACUUM THEY CANNOT HEAR THE CORRUSCATING MILK WHITE EXPLOSIONS OF LIGHT AND ENERGY THAT SCRATCH HELTER-SKELTER ACROSS THE EBON VOID...

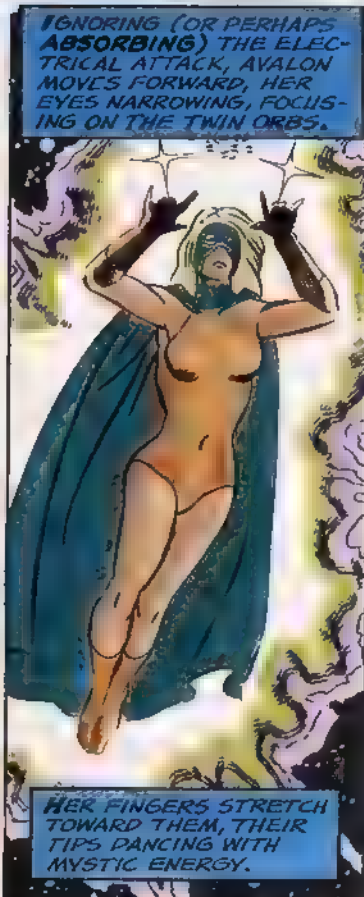


THEY CAN BUT **STARE** AT THE RELEADING SATELLITES...



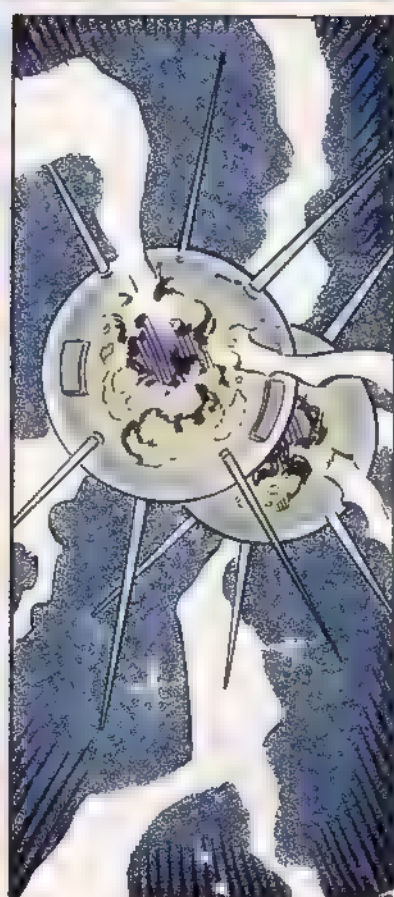
...AND SILENTLY PRAY THEY CAN DESTROY IT.

DOT IS THE FIRST TO SLIP BACK.



IGNORING (OR PERHAPS ABSORBING) THE ELECTRICAL ATTACK, AVALON MOVES FORWARD, HER EYES NARROWING, FOCUSING ON THE TWIN ORBS.

HER FINGERS STRETCH TOWARD THEM, THEIR TIPS DANCING WITH MYSTIC ENERGY.



SHE PAUSES, READYING
HERSELF, WHEN A SLIM
FORM PUSHES AHEAD...

SHE FOLLOWS.
MIRACLE MAN
IS TO ONE SIDE,
DR. ECLIPSE
TO HER OTHER...

...AND THEY
SLIP THROUGH
TIME GONE
MAD!!

SHE TUMBLES INTO
THE SATELLITE EVEN
AS IT PULLS AWAY.

THOSE WHO
IGNORE THE
PAST ARE
DOOMED TO
REPEAT IT...
REPEAT IT...
REPEAT IT...
REPEAT IT...

SURROUNDING THEM
IS PAST, PRESENT,
AND FUTURE...

...HOPES AND DREAMS CAN BE CAUGHT
WITHIN A MOMENTARY GLANCE, BEFORE
OTHER ERAS CAUSE DISRUPTION.

THE FUTURE IS
THERE, WITHIN
REACH, WITHIN
TOUCH.

IGNORE YOUR GOAL,
AVALON. YOUR FUTURE
OFFERS TEMPTATION...
GIVE IN... GIVE IN...

AN ELECTRICAL FLASH EXPLODES
WITHIN MIRACLEMAN'S SIGHT.
INSIDE IT IS GARGUNZA SETTING
UP MICHAEL MORAN FOR THE IN-
CREDIBLE CHANGES THAT AWAIT.

I KNOW IT
IS DIFFICULT
BUT YOU MUST
FIGHT IT!
FIGHT OFF
THESE PASTS
AND FUTURES...
OR THE PRESENT
WILL BE
DESTROYED!

THEY TURN AWAY, ALTERATION NO
CHOICE. THE SATELLITE DEVOLVES
THROUGH TIME FASTER THAN THEY
CAN APPROACH.

THEY CANNOT CATCH IT.
THEY CANNOT DESTROY IT.

THERE
IS NO HOPE...
WE HAVE---

ECLIPSE--
THERE! MY
GOD--LOOK!

THEY CANNOT SUCCEED
IN THEIR MISSION.



THE TIME
ANOMOLIES
ARE STRIKING
EVERYWHERE!

I-IT'S
TOO
LATE!

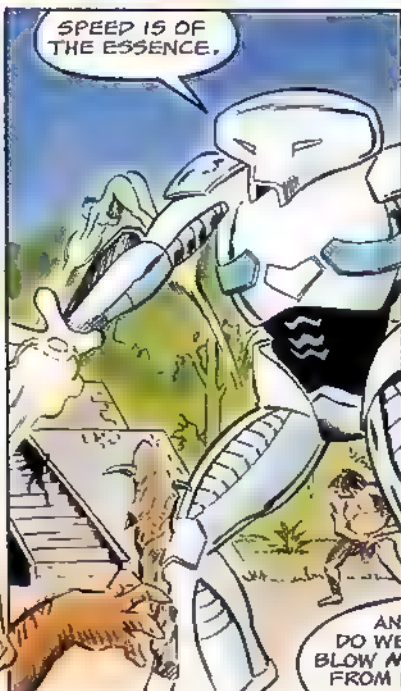
KEEP
THEM AWAY
FROM THE
GEM--

--AT
LEAST
UNTIL **WE**
CAN GET
TO IT.



THEN
MOVE
QUICKLY,
BOY.

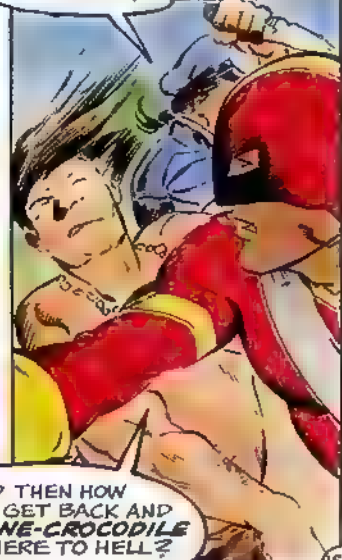
THERE
ARE MORE
OF THESE...
THINGS
THAN THERE
ARE OF
US.



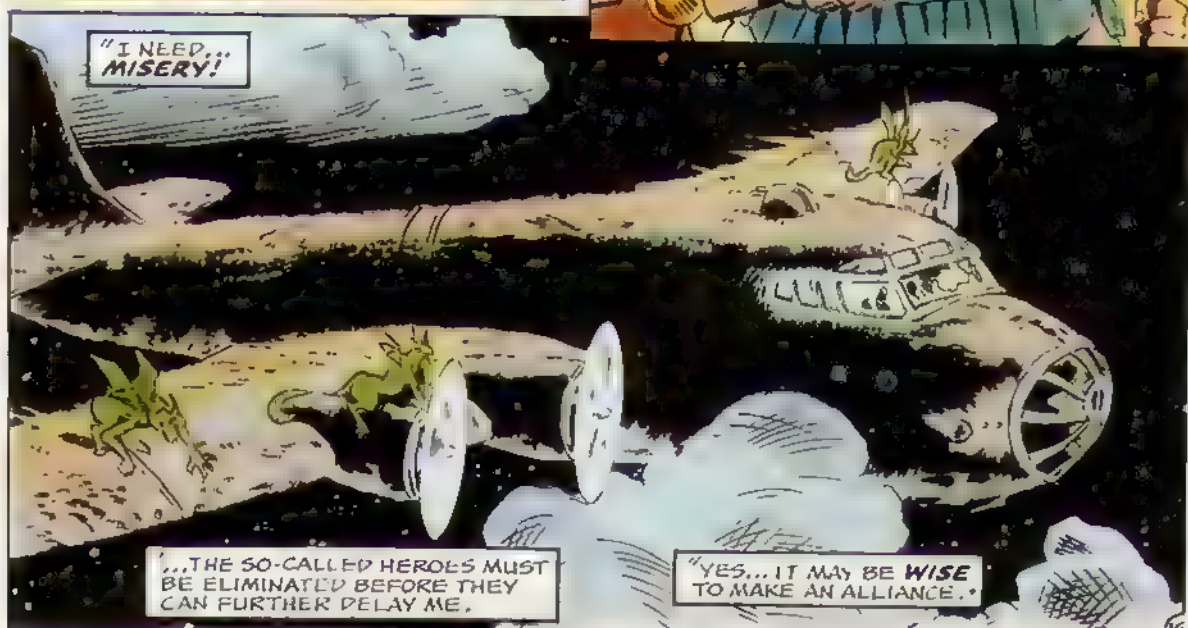
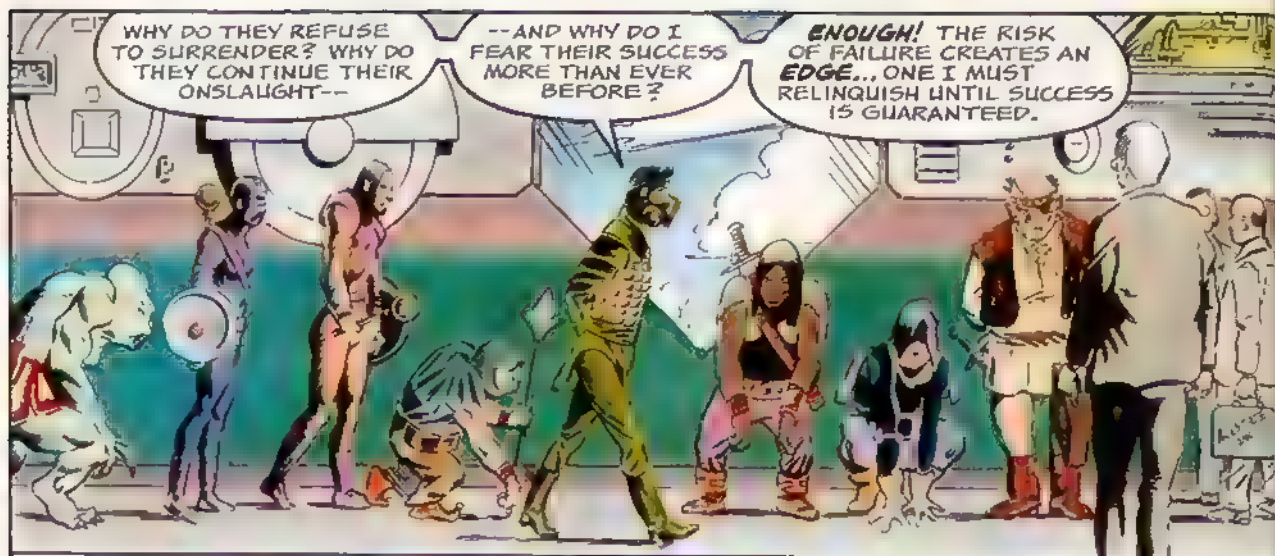
SPEED IS OF
THE ESSENCE.

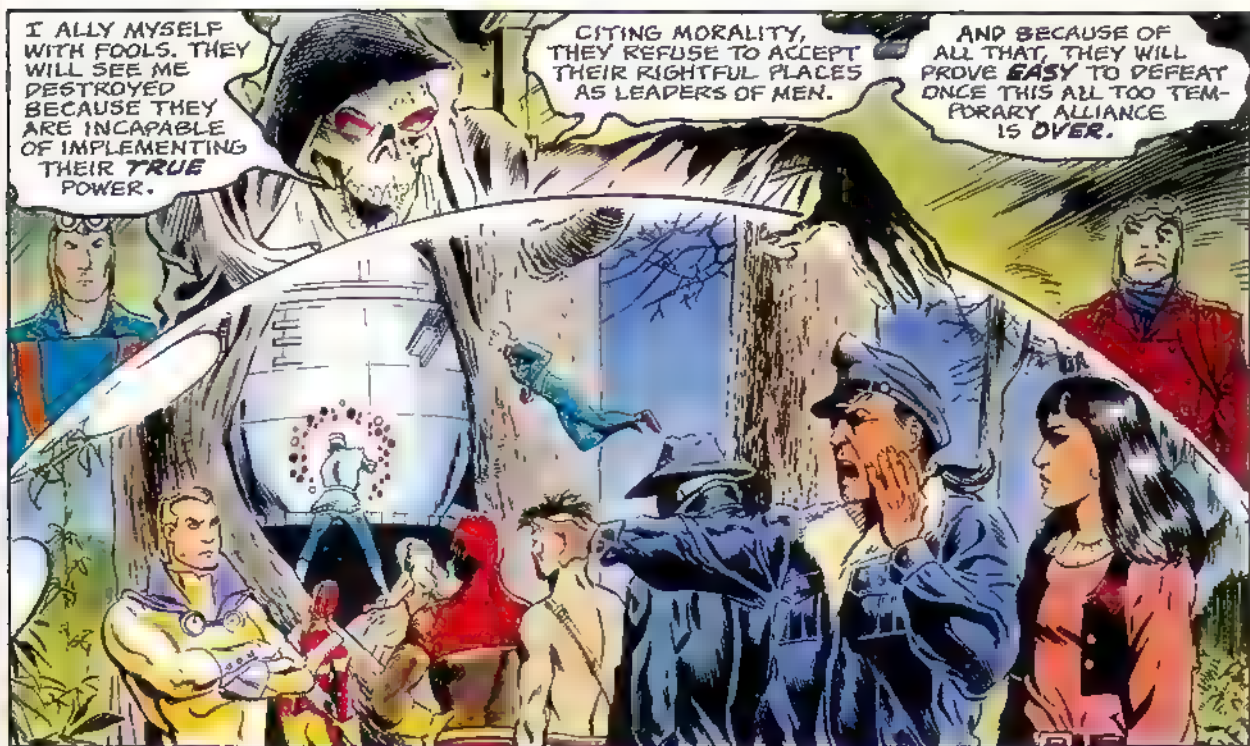
MEGABYTE, YOU'RE A MASTER
OF THE **OBVIOUS.**

BUT WHAT
I WANNA KNOW IS--HOW
THE HELL DO WE GET RID
OF THEM?!



AND THEN HOW
DO WE GET BACK AND
BLOW **NINE-CROCODILE**
FROM HERE TO HELL?





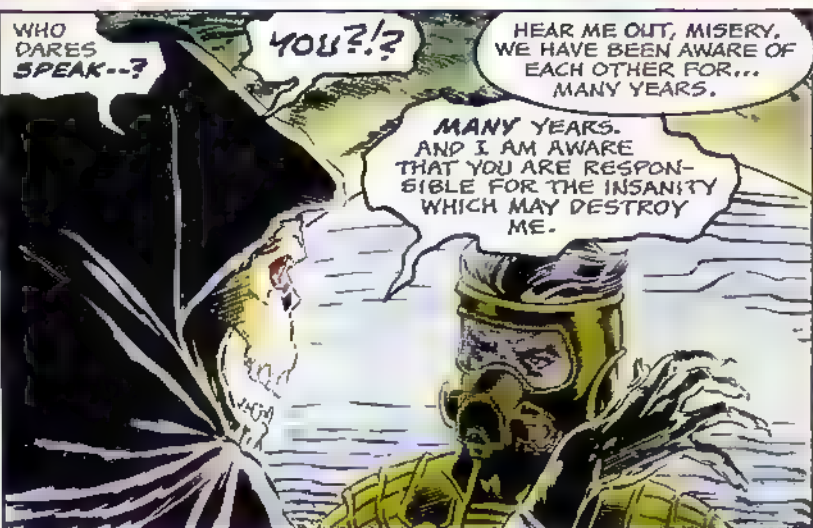
I ALLY MYSELF WITH FOOLS. THEY WILL SEE ME DESTROYED BECAUSE THEY ARE INCAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTING THEIR **TRUE** POWER.

CITING MORALITY, THEY REFUSE TO ACCEPT THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACES AS LEADERS OF MEN.

AND BECAUSE OF ALL THAT, THEY WILL PROVE **EASY** TO DEFEAT ONCE THIS ALL TOO TEMPORARY ALLIANCE IS OVER.



MISERY... MISERY...



WHO DARES SPEAK--?

YOU?/?

HEAR ME OUT, MISERY. WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF EACH OTHER FOR... MANY YEARS.

MANY YEARS. AND I AM AWARE THAT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INSANITY WHICH MAY DESTROY ME.



TRUE... WHICH IS WHY AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN US IS **MUTUALLY** BENEFICIAL.

THOSE FOOLS ARE **NOT** YOUR FRIENDS...OR YOUR EQUALS. INDEED, WE BOTH SEEK THEIR DESTRUCTION.

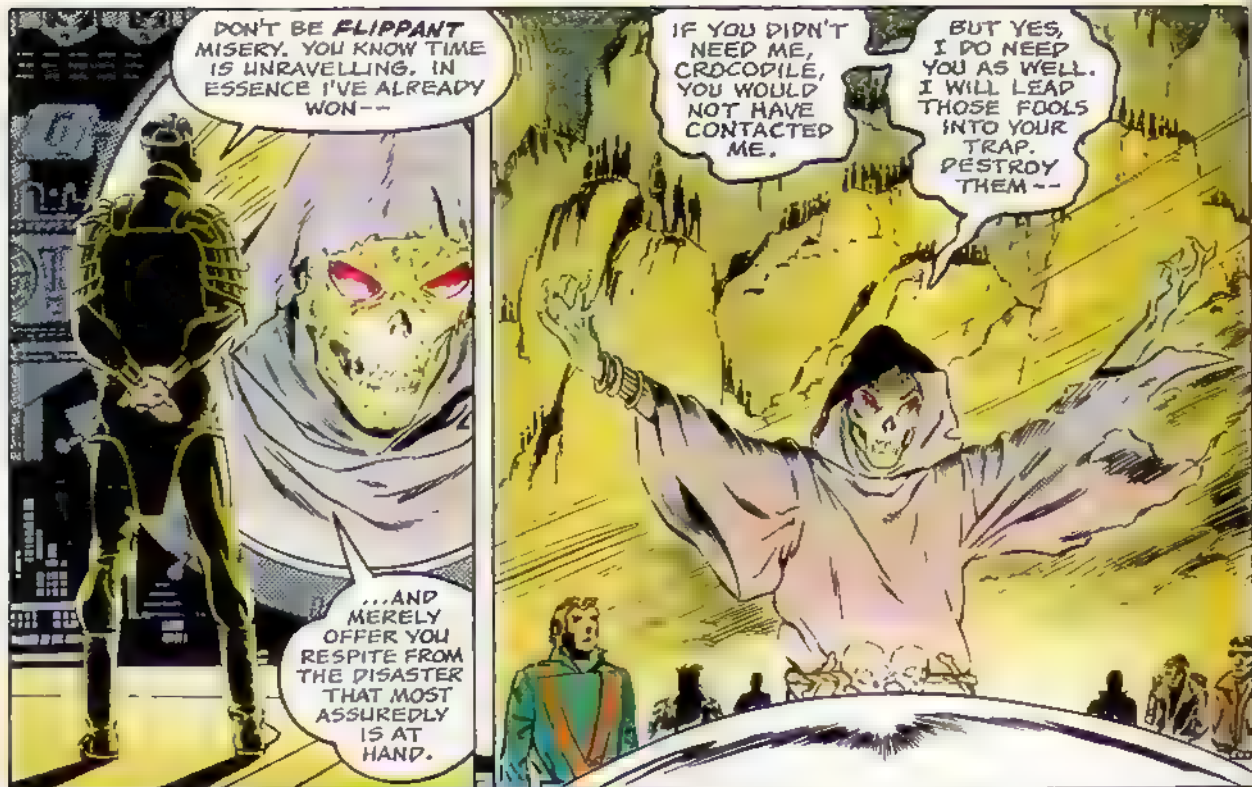
TOGETHER WE CAN **ASSURE** THAT PLEASANT FATE WHILE INSURING **US** THE POWER WE DEMAND.



GO ON, CROCODILE.

I WILL LISTEN AWHILE LONGER.

AS LONG AS YOU... AMUSE ME.



DON'T BE **FLIPPANT** MISERY. YOU KNOW TIME IS UNRAVELLING. IN ESSENCE I'VE ALREADY WON--

IF YOU DIDN'T NEED ME, CROCODILE, YOU WOULD NOT HAVE CONTACTED ME.

BUT YES, I DO NEED YOU AS WELL. I WILL LEAD THOSE FOOLS INTO YOUR TRAP. DESTROY THEM--

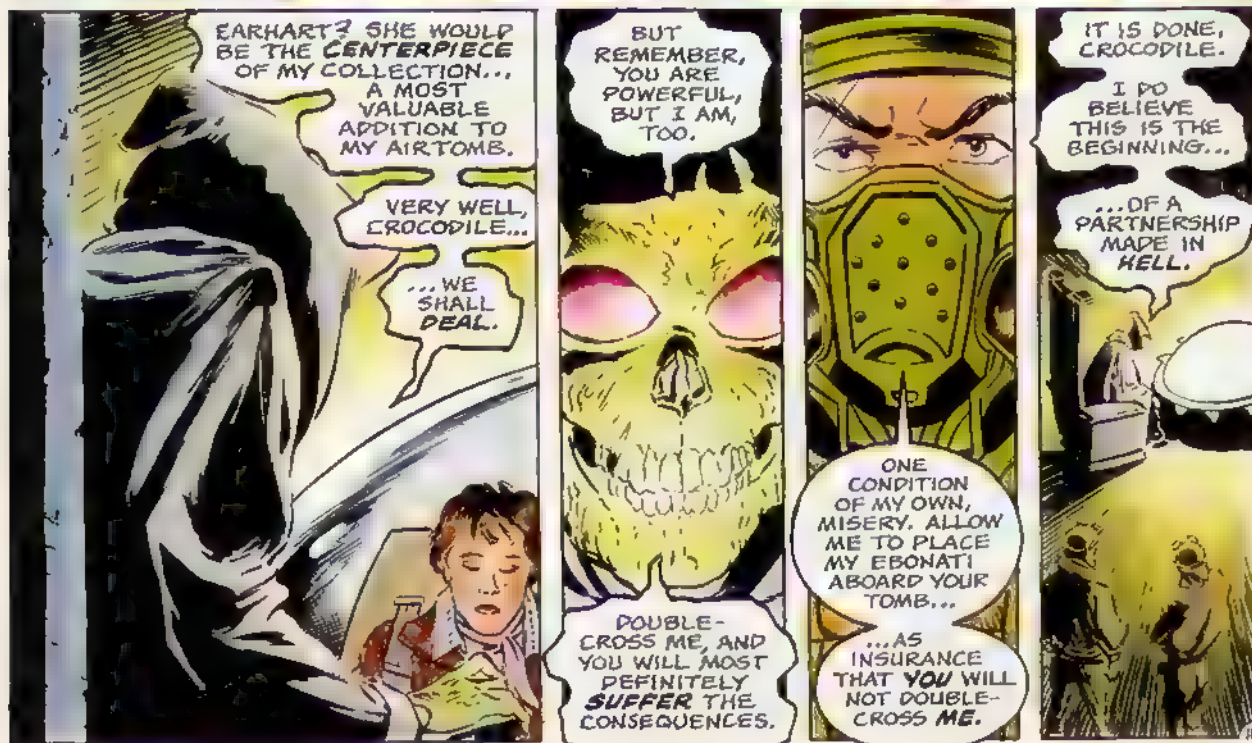
...AND MERELY OFFER YOU RESPITE FROM THE DISASTER THAT MOST ASSUREDLY IS AT HAND.

-- AND IN RETURN I WILL MAKE CERTAIN YOUR LIFE IS SPARED.

NOT ENOUGH, CROCODILE. I DEMAND THE **SOULS** OF ALL THOSE WHO ARE--

-- LOST? LOOK, I POSSESS **AMELIA EARHART**... A FLIER OF SOME REKNOWN, I BELIEVE. HER ENGINEER FRED NOONAN IS MERELY A **BONUS**.

HERE THEY ARE, IN MY POWER. PERHAPS YOU WOULD **LIKE** THEM.



EARHART? SHE WOULD BE THE **CENTERPIECE** OF MY COLLECTION... A MOST VALUABLE ADDITION TO MY AIRTOMB.

VERY WELL, CROCODILE...

...WE SHALL DEAL.

BUT REMEMBER, YOU ARE POWERFUL, BUT I AM, TOO.

DOUBLE-CROSS ME, AND YOU WILL MOST DEFINITELY **SUFFER** THE CONSEQUENCES.

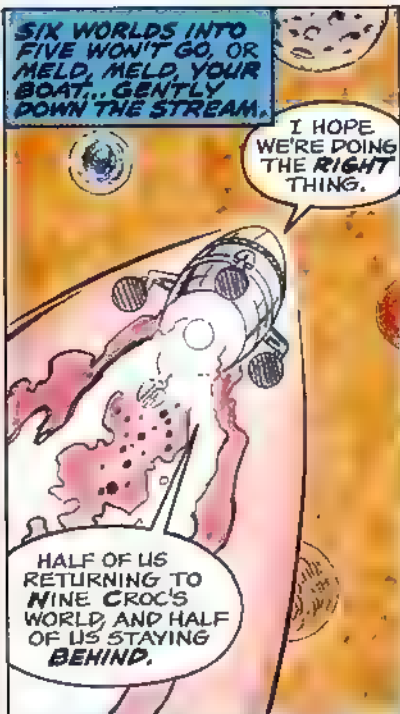
ONE CONDITION OF MY OWN, MISERY. ALLOW ME TO PLACE MY EBONATI ABOARD YOUR TOMB...

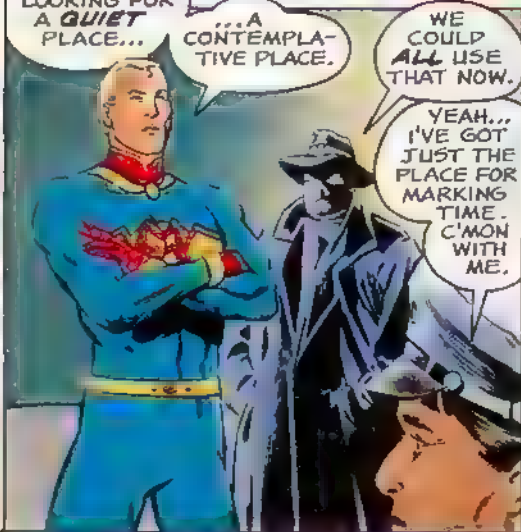
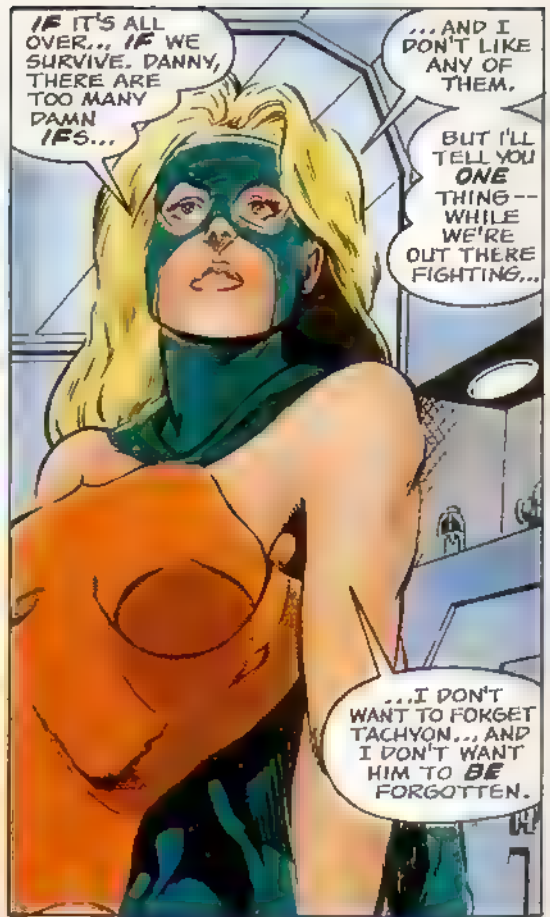
...AS INSURANCE THAT **YOU** WILL NOT DOUBLE-CROSS ME.

IT IS DONE, CROCODILE.

I DO BELIEVE THIS IS THE BEGINNING...

...OF A PARTNERSHIP MADE IN HELL.





AND WHILE MIRACLEMAN BROODS ON THE EVENTS OF PAST HOURS, HIS OWN WORLD IS ALSO AWASH IN DREAMS AND MEMORIES.

Interlude:

MIRACLEMAN

THANK YOU

THANK
YOU, THAT WAS
BEAUTIFUL.

HANG ON
A SEC



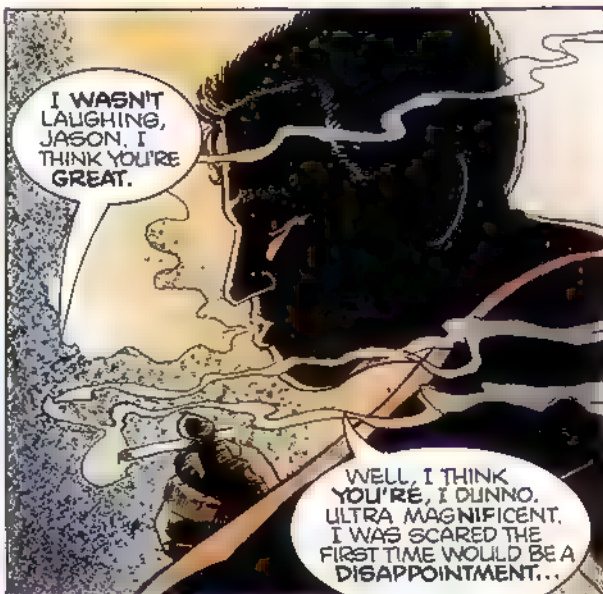
YAHOOO!



WHAT
WAS THAT
FOR?

I'VE BEEN
DREAMING
ABOUT DOING
THIS FOR THE LAST
FIVE YEARS! MY
FIRST CIGARETTE
AFTER SEX!

...DON'T
LAUGH.



I WASN'T
LAUGHING,
JASON. I
THINK YOU'RE
GREAT.

WELL, I THINK
YOU'RE, I DUNNO.
ULTRA MAGNIFICENT.
I WAS SCARED THE
FIRST TIME WOULD BE A
DISAPPOINTMENT...

"THAT'S THE **THIRD** IMPORTANT
THING THAT EVER HAPPENED
TO ME. I'VE BEEN COUNTING."

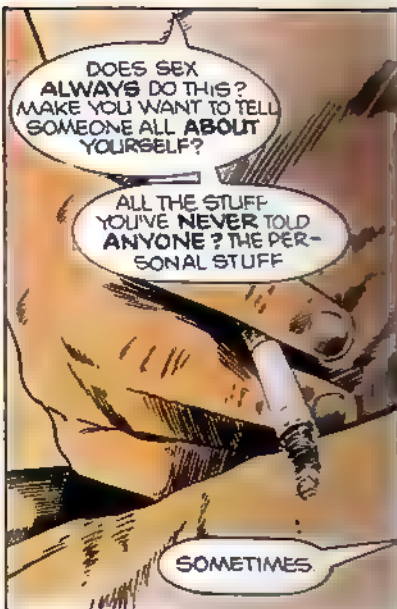
SCREAMING

NEIL GAIMAN - WRITER
MARK BUCKINGHAM - ARTIST
ELITTA FELL - LETTERER
SAM PARSONS - COLORIST
FRED BURKE - EDITOR



I MET HIM. THAT WAS THE FIRST IMPORTANT THING. THE SECOND WAS WHEN I WENT TO THE SEASIDE TO VISIT MY AUNT.

THAT WAS BACK IN '85.



DOES SEX ALWAYS DO THIS? MAKE YOU WANT TO TELL SOMEONE ALL ABOUT YOURSELF?

ALL THE STUFF YOU'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE? THE PERSONAL STUFF

SOMETIMES



I NEVER EXPECTED THAT. I WANT YOU TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT ME

I DID MEET HIM HONEST

I MET HIM BEFORE IT ALL STARTED

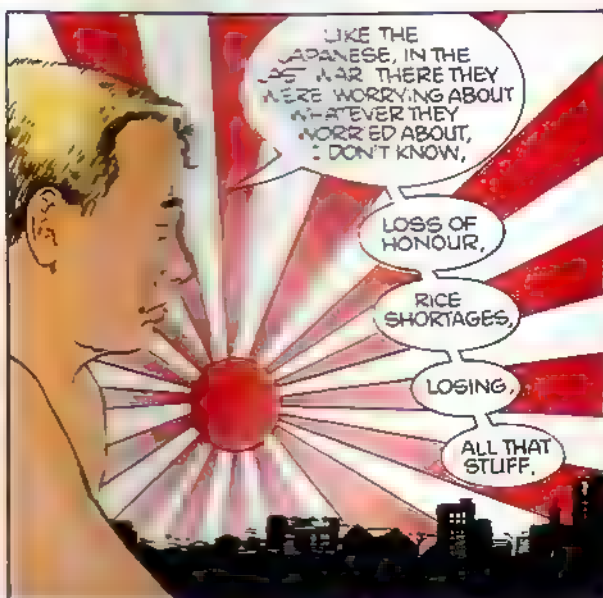
BEFORE THE MIRACLES. BEFORE LONDON. BEFORE..."



S' FUNNY. THE THINGS YOU WORRY ABOUT NEVER HAPPEN...

...IT'S THE THINGS YOU DON'T WORRY ABOUT. THINGS YOU DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT: THEY'RE WAITING, HIDING IN THE SHADOWS.

BIDDING THEIR TIME.



LIKE THE JAPANESE, IN THE '30s WAR THERE THEY WERE WORRYING ABOUT WHATEVER THEY WORRIED ABOUT, I DON'T KNOW,

LOSS OF HONOUR,

RICE SHORTAGES,

LOSING,

ALL THAT STUFF.

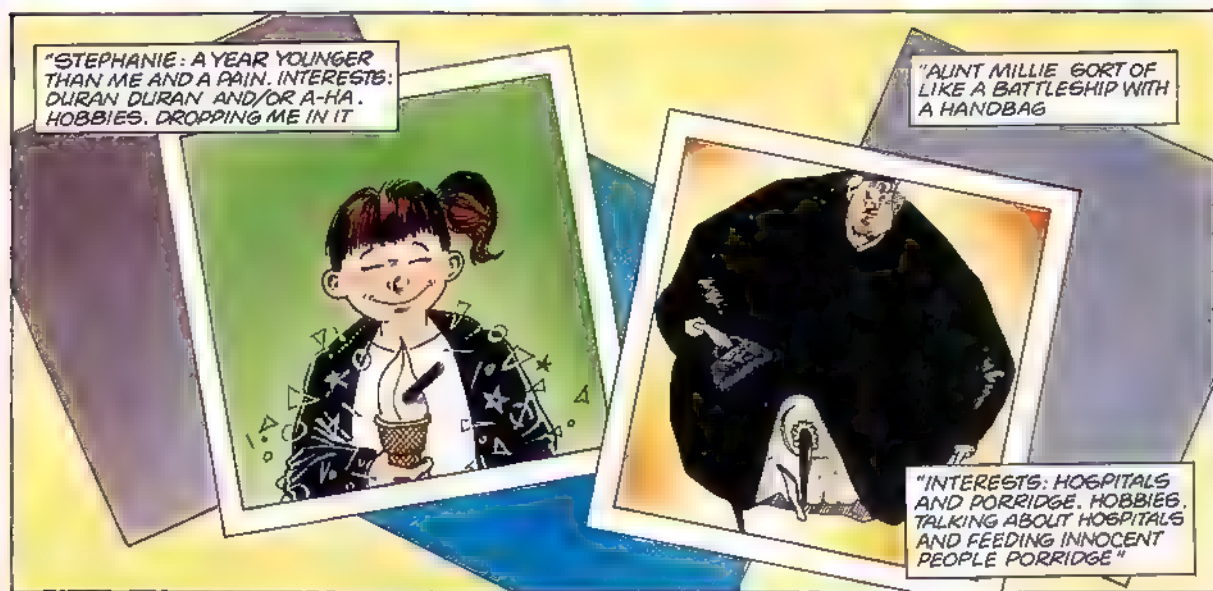
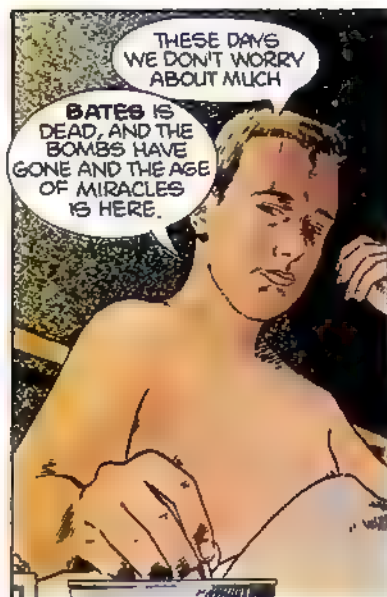


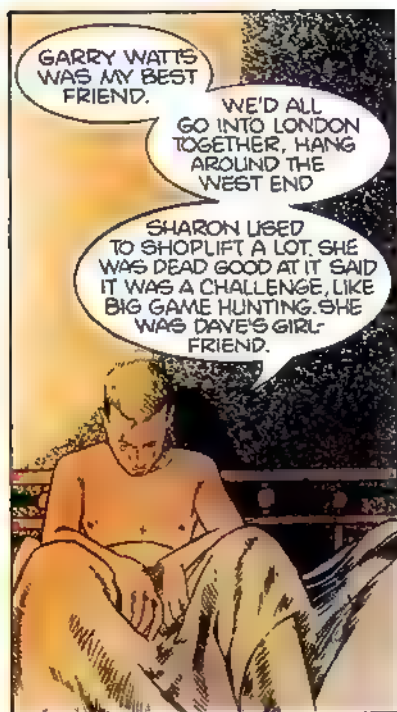
THEY DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT THE BOMB, THOUGH.

"THEY DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT THEIR FLESH MELTING FROM THEIR FINGERS, EYES LIQUEFYING IN SOCKETS, GENERATIONS OF CANCER, AND FIRE AND RADIATION SICKNESS..."

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU.

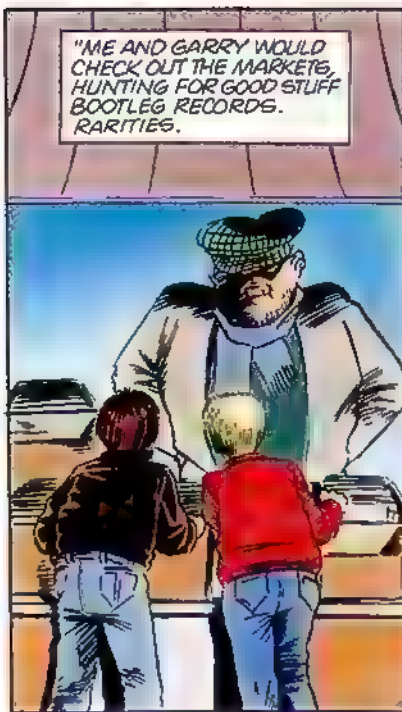




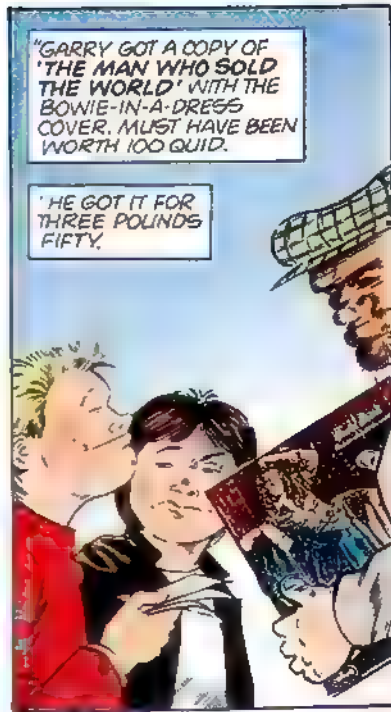
GARRY WATTS
WAS MY BEST
FRIEND.

WE'D ALL
GO INTO LONDON
TOGETHER, HANG
AROUND THE
WEST END

SHARON USED
TO SHOPLIFT A LOT. SHE
WAS DEAD GOOD AT IT SAID
IT WAS A CHALLENGE, LIKE
BIG GAME HUNTING. SHE
WAS DAVE'S GIRL-
FRIEND.



"ME AND GARRY WOULD
CHECK OUT THE MARKETS,
HUNTING FOR GOOD STUFF
BOOTLEG RECORDS.
RARITIES."



"GARRY GOT A COPY OF
'THE MAN WHO SOLD
THE WORLD' WITH THE
BOWIE-IN-A-DRESS
COVER. MUST HAVE BEEN
WORTH 100 QUID."

"HE GOT IT FOR
THREE POUNDS
FIFTY."

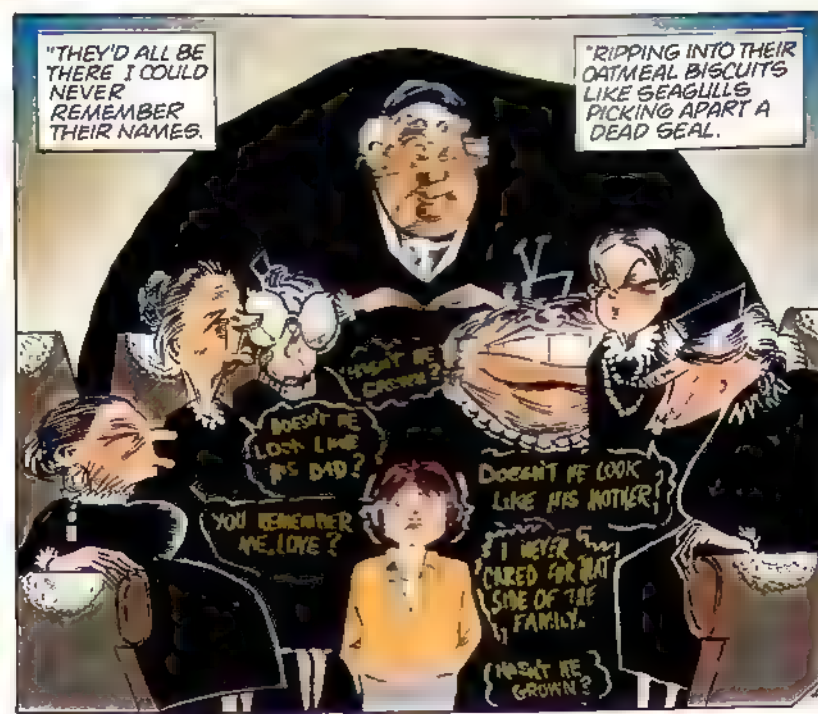
"ANYWAY, I GOT SENT TO HAWKING-
ON-SEA WITH BLOODY STEPHANIE



"THE MOST BORING PLACE IN
CREATION I COULD HAVE
SCREAMED."



"BREAKFAST WAS PORRIDGE
EIGHT O'CLOCK. FROM NINE
UNTIL FOUR WE HAD TO BE OUT
OF THE HOUSE. WE HAD TO BE
BACK BY FOUR, FOR TEA."



"THEY'D ALL BE
THERE I COULD
NEVER
REMEMBER
THEIR NAMES."

"RIPPING INTO THEIR
OATMEAL BISCUITS
LIKE SEAGULLS
PICKING APART A
DEAD SEAL."

"MIGHT BE
GARRY?"

"DOESN'T HE
LOOK LIKE
HIS DAD?"

"YOU REMEMBER
ME, LOVE?"

"DOESN'T HE LOOK
LIKE HIS MOTHER?"

"I NEVER
CARED FOR THAT
SIDE OF THE
FAMILY."

"MIGHT BE
GROWN?"

"THEY'D GO ON AND ON AND ON ABOUT WHOEVER WAS IN HOSPITAL THAT WEEK WITH HER LEG OR INSIDES



"THEY'D MAKE A FUSS OF STEPHANIE, AND THEY'D IGNORE ME

"AND STEPHANIE MADE FRIENDS WITH THE GIRL NEXT DOOR, SO THEY'D GO OFF AND TALK ABOUT SIMON LE BON, AND I'D BE LEFT TO ENJOY MYSELF ON THE SEAFRONT



"YOU COULDN'T DO MUCH.

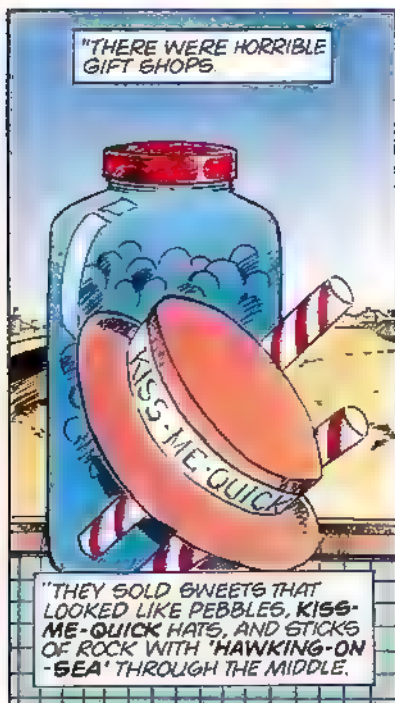


"THERE WAS AN OLD PIER THAT WAS CLOSED OFF UNDER RECONSTRUCTION



"IT HAD BEEN UNDER RECONSTRUCTION SINCE 1973.

"THERE WERE HORRIBLE GIFT SHOPS.



"THEY SOLD SWEETS THAT LOOKED LIKE PEBBLES, KISS-ME-QUICK HATS, AND STICKS OF ROCK WITH 'HAWKING-ON-SEA' THROUGH THE MIDDLE.

"THE SKIES WERE GREY AND TIRED, AND THE SEA WAS A MUDDY BROWN, AND THE BEACHES WERE JUST PEBBLES



"TO WALK UP AND DOWN THEM, LISTENING TO THE SCREAMS OF THE SEAGULLS AND LOOKING FOR DRIFTGLASS, LIKE IN THE DELANEY STORY."



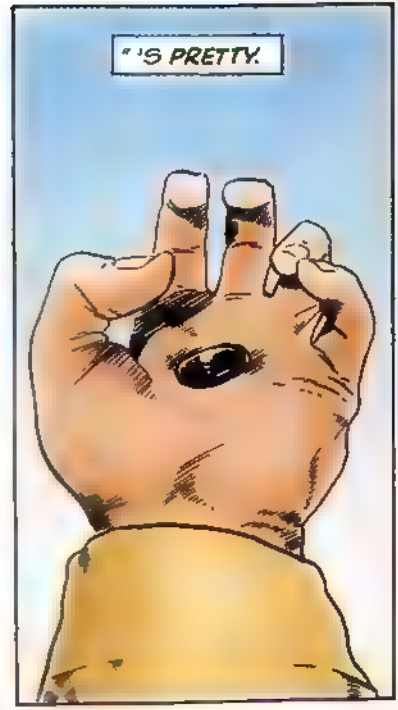


YOU KNOW THAT ONE?

MM? EH...NO...

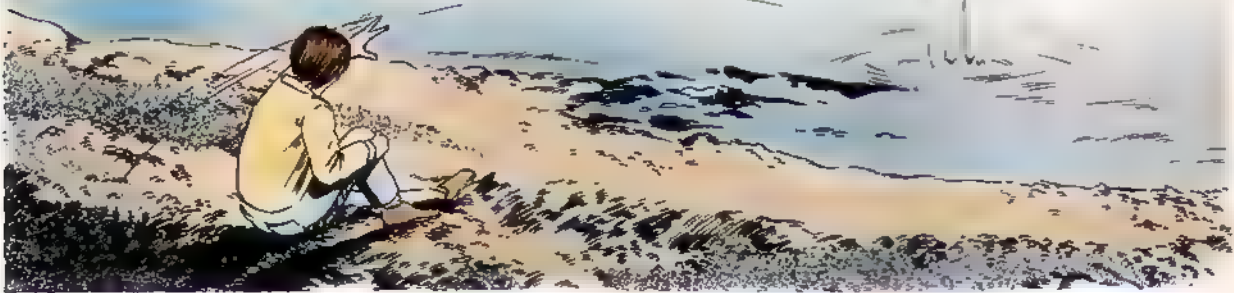


'S'REALLY GOOD. 'S ABOUT THIS BLOKE AND THE PEBBLES YOU FIND THAT USED TO BE BROKEN MILK BOTTLES AND STUFF, BUT THE SEA WASHES ALL THE HARD EDGES OFF THEM.



'S PRETTY.

"I THOUGHT I'D GO MAD FROM BOREDOM. I'D SIT THERE STARING OUT TO SEA, WONDERING WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THEY DROPPED THE BOMB



"IMAGINING THE SEA BOILING, THE ICE-CREAMS MELTING IN THEIR CONES, THE POSTCARDS GOING BLACK AND CHARRING..."



"IMAGINING ALL THE SMUTTY JOKES AND PICTURES OF THE PIER RISING INTO THE SKY IN A TOWER OF BLACK ASH AND WHITE ASH ...



"I SENT A POSTCARD TO GARRY. IT SAID, 'HAVING A HORRIBLE TIME, WISH I WAS THERE WITH YOU.

"OF COURSE HE NEVER GOT IT.

"BATES GOT HIM FIRST"



WHERE WERE YOU WHEN LONDON HAPPENED?

HNH? IN NEPAL, OF COURSE.



OH, YEAH. I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT. SORRY.

I OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN IN LONDON. I OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN WITH THEM.

I WONDER WHAT IT WAS LIKE...



...THEY NEVER IDENTIFIED SHARON AND DAVE. I THINK ABOUT THEM.

THEY COULD HAVE BEEN PART OF THE MESS IN OXFORD STREET. YOU KNOW, ALL THE BITS.

WHEN HE WAS JUST DRAGGING PEOPLE UP IN THE SKY AND DROPPING THEM.



"MAYBE THEIR GUTS FORMED PART OF THE ROPE HE MADE AROUND CENTRE POINT. MAYBE.



"I DUNNO."



I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO GARRY, THOUGH

YOU SAW THE KUBRICK MOVIE, 'VENEER'? WITH ALL THE DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE?

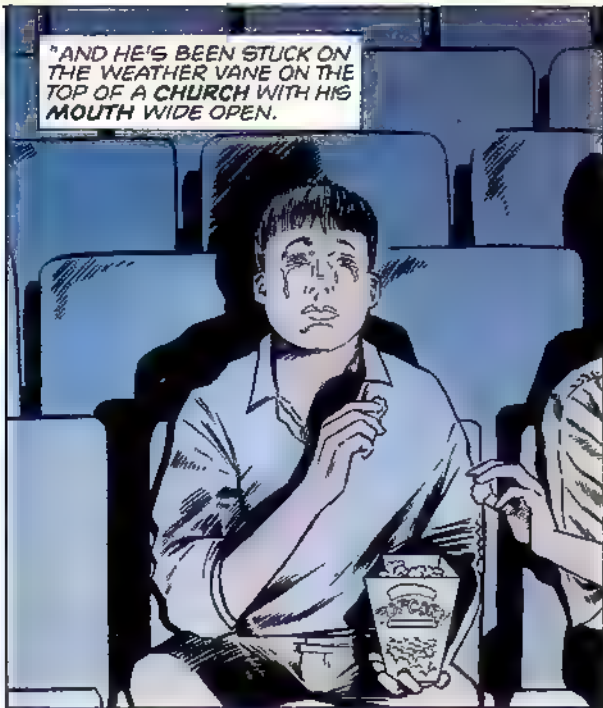
MM.



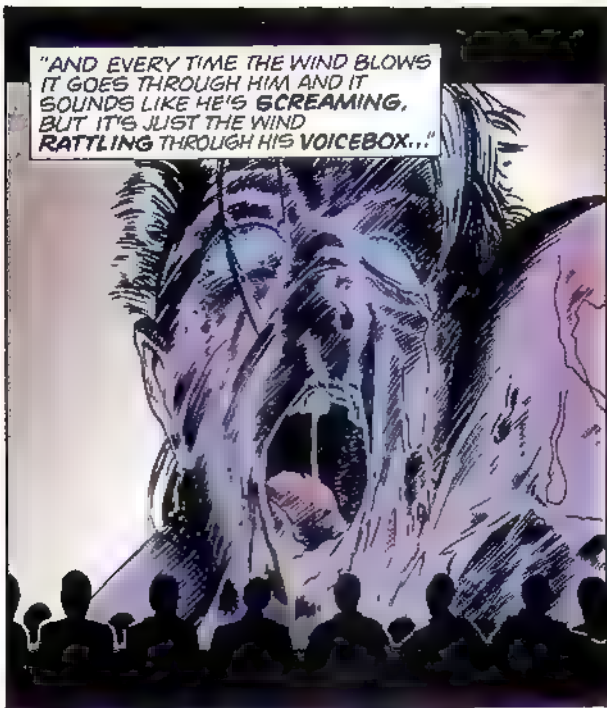
"THERE'S A SCENE IN THAT, JUST AFTER THE CHESSBOARD OF BREASTS, WHEN YOU SEE THIS YOUNG GUY.

"AND HE'S BEEN CUT DOWN THE MIDDLE, AND HIS INSIDES HAVE BEEN RIPPED OUT..."

"AND HE'S BEEN STUCK ON THE WEATHER VANE ON THE TOP OF A CHURCH WITH HIS MOUTH WIDE OPEN.



"AND EVERY TIME THE WIND BLOWS IT GOES THROUGH HIM AND IT SOUNDS LIKE HE'S SCREAMING, BUT IT'S JUST THE WIND RATTLING THROUGH HIS VOICEBOX..."

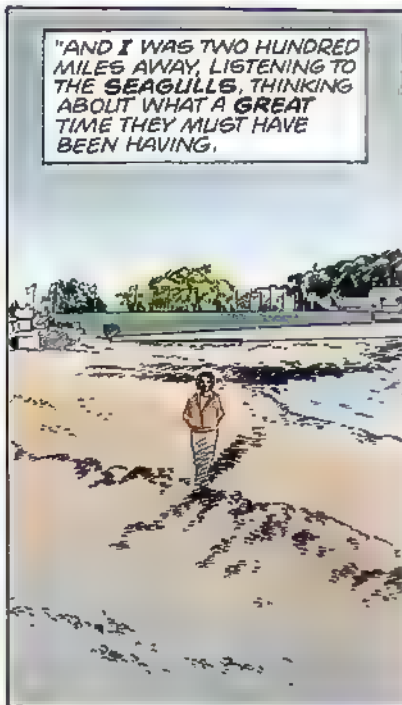


THAT WAS GARRY



HE USED TO CALL ME ANNIE, WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER. 'CAUSE OF MY NAME. JASON OAKLEY. ANNIE OAKLEY.

"AND I WAS TWO HUNDRED MILES AWAY, LISTENING TO THE SEAGULLS, THINKING ABOUT WHAT A GREAT TIME THEY MUST HAVE BEEN HAVING.



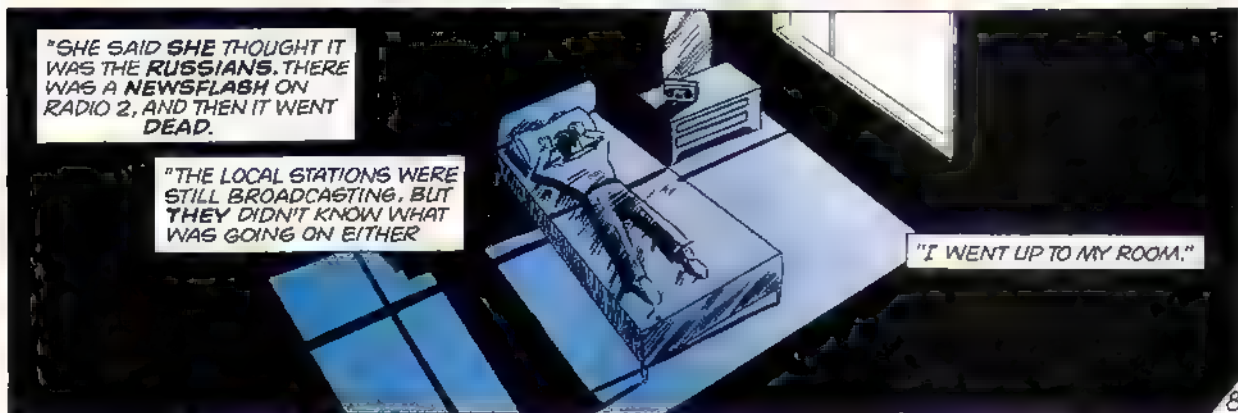
"I POSTED GARRY'S CARD WHEN I GOT BACK AUNT MILLIE SAID."



THERE'S BEEN SOME TROUBLE IN LONDON.

"SHE SAID SHE THOUGHT IT WAS THE RUSSIANS. THERE WAS A NEWSFLASH ON RADIO 2, AND THEN IT WENT DEAD.

"THE LOCAL STATIONS WERE STILL BROADCASTING, BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON EITHER



"I WENT UP TO MY ROOM."



AND I
THOUGHT ABOUT
THE **FIRST**
IMPORTANT THING
THAT EVER HAPPENED
TO ME.

I'VE NEVER
TOLD ANYONE
THIS BEFORE LONDON.
I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D
IMAGINED IT.



AFTER
LONDON... I
THOUGHT OTHER
PEOPLE WOULD THINK
I'D MADE IT UP... TO
BE IMPORTANT.



"I WAS NINE OR TEN

"I HAD THIS PLACE IN
EPPING FOREST IN A
HOLLOW TREE, DON'T
LAUGH. IT WAS MY
BOMB SHELTER...

"IN CASE OF NUCLEAR
WAR, I HAD HALF A
PACKET OF TOFFOS, A
PEA SHOOTER, A COPY
OF FIESTA, SOME FAGS



"AND I WENT DOWN
THERE ONE NIGHT AND
I SAW HIM ALL
GLITTERY AND SHINY.
AND I SPOKE TO HIM



"AND I SAID TO HIM,
**PROVE TO ME YOU'RE
A SUPER-HERO, SO HE
WAVES AT THIS ROCK
AND...**



"WHOOMF!

"IT EXPLODES



AND I-- I CAN'T
BELIEVE I DID THIS
--I ASKED IF I
COULD BE HIS BOY
PARTNER

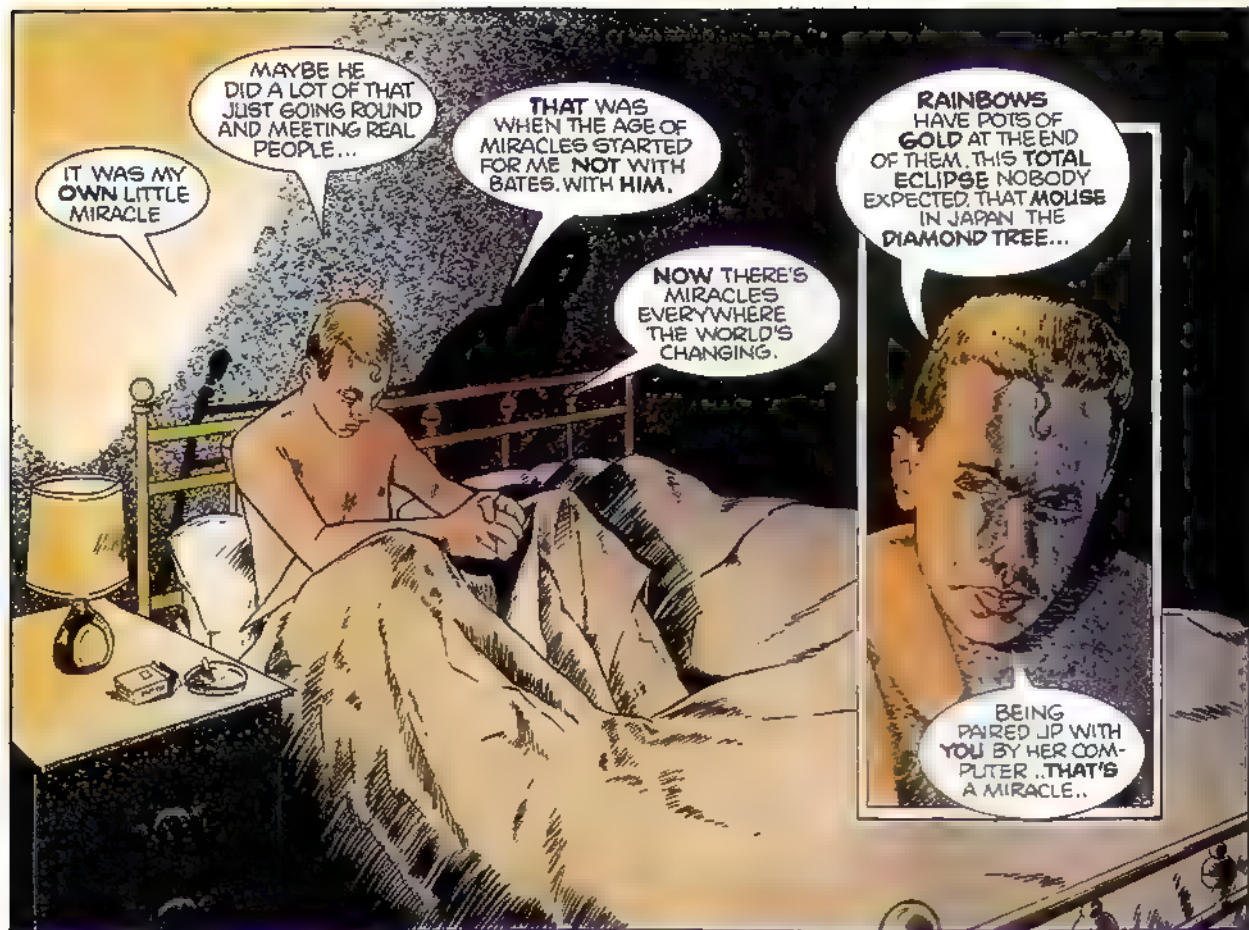
"...KID MIRACLEMAN
... CHRIST.

"HE SAID NO. MAYBE
HE KNEW WHAT WAS
GOING TO HAPPEN.



"AND I SAID, IF THERE
WAS A NUCLEAR WAR,
WOULD HE **SAVE ME?**

"HE SAID, NO PROMISES,
BUT HE'D TRY. IF HE
COULD. AND WE SHAKE
HANDS AND HE FLIES
OFF INTO THE SKY"



IT WAS MY
OWN LITTLE
MIRACLE

MAYBE HE
DID A LOT OF THAT
JUST GOING ROUND
AND MEETING REAL
PEOPLE...

THAT WAS
WHEN THE AGE OF
MIRACLES STARTED
FOR ME NOT WITH
BATES. WITH HIM.

NOW THERE'S
MIRACLES
EVERYWHERE
THE WORLD'S
CHANGING.

RAINBOWS
HAVE POTS OF
GOLD AT THE END
OF THEM. THIS TOTAL
ECLIPSE NOBODY
EXPECTED. THAT MOUSE
IN JAPAN THE
DIAMOND TREE...

BEING
PAIRED UP WITH
YOU BY HER COM-
PUTER.. THAT'S
A MIRACLE..



AND SOMETIMES
I WONDER. WAS HE
LOOKING OUT FOR ME?
IS THAT WHY I GOT
SENT TO THE
SEASIDE?

I SHOULD
HAVE BEEN IN LONDON
WHEN IT HAPPENED. AND
I WASN'T. THAT'S A
MIRACLE. GODS KEEP
THEIR PROMISES...
THAT'S WHY
THEY'RE GODS..



I'VE NEVER
TOLD ANYONE ELSE
THAT BUT IT'S
TRUE...

I MET HIM,
TALKED TO HIM,
JUST LIKE YOU'D TALK
TO, I DUNNO. ANYONE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK
ABOUT THAT, THEN?



ARE YOU
ASLEEP?

»SIGH«

LISTEN TO
THE WIND OUT
THERE IT'S WILD
TONIGHT BRR THE
NOISE IT MAKES
SCREAMING



I LOVE
YOU. GOD, BUT
I LOVE YOU

G'NIGHT

MEANWHILE...

WE HAVE
ACHIEVED **PARTIAL**
SUCCESS, BUT WE MUST
STILL COMPLETE
OUR MISSION.

TELL US
SOMETHING
WE DON'T **KNOW**
ALREADY.

THE SATELLITES
MUST BE DESTROYED...
AND TO DO SO WE
MUST LEARN WHAT
POWERS THEM.

RETURN TO THE GRAND CANYON-- IT
WAS THERE THAT ZZED FIRST CONCEIVED
THE SATELLITES' SCHEMATICS.

THAT
TRUE?

THAT'S
WHERE WE
FIRST MET
ZZED.

I JUST DON'T
KNOW IF WE SHOULD
LEAVE THE TEMPLE.
IF CROCODILE'S
MEN RETURN...

LISTEN, BLONDIE-- I'M
SICKA THIS CRAP. SO
IF WE C'N FINISH
ALLIGATOR-
BREATH
OFF
FAST--

--I WANT
IN -- **NOW!**

I SAY WE GO
TO THE CANYON AN'
BLAST IT TO HELL.

MISERY DID
AS HE PROMISED.
EXCELLENT.

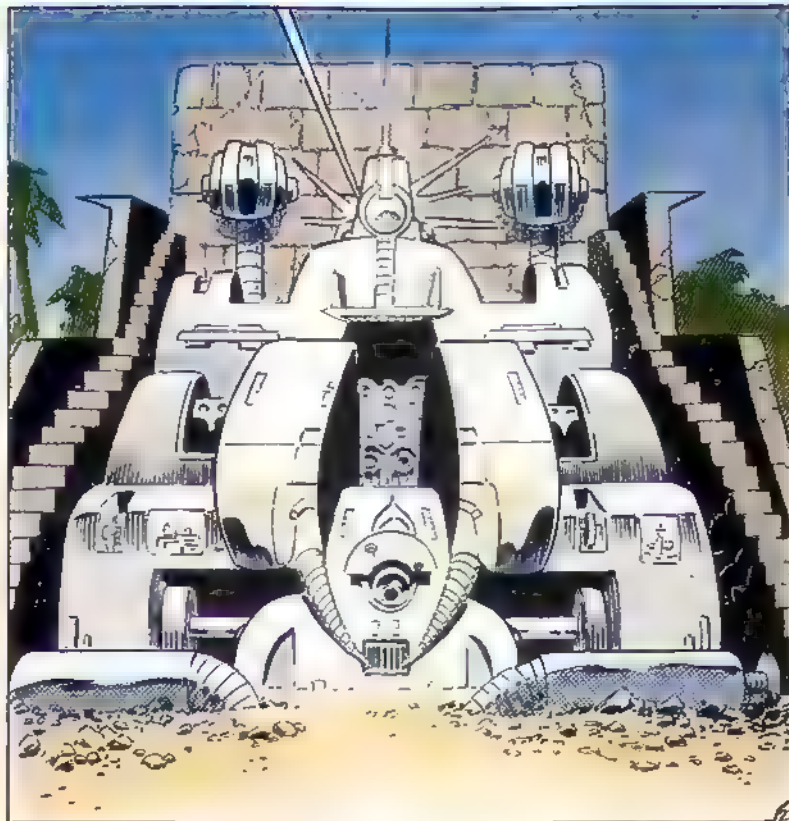
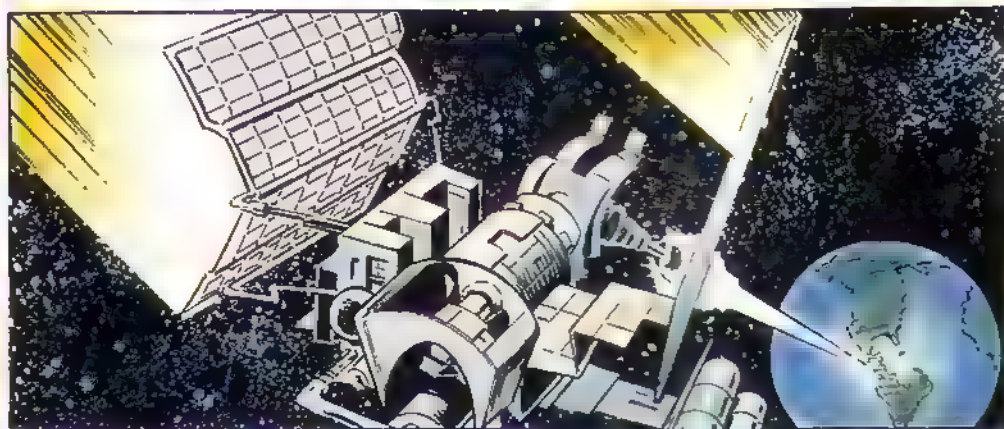
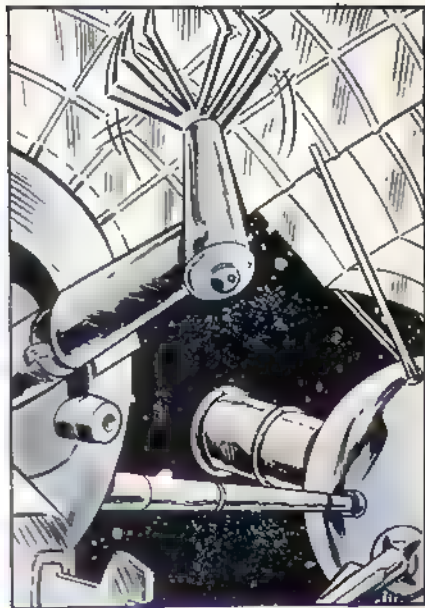
ZZED'S MACHINES ONLY POS-
SESSED **SOME** OF THE POWER
I NEED. **MY** MACHINES MUST
SUPPLY THE REST.

THE TEMPLES
IN ALL TIMES WILL
BE **LINKED** BY
THE ENERGY I
SUPPLY.

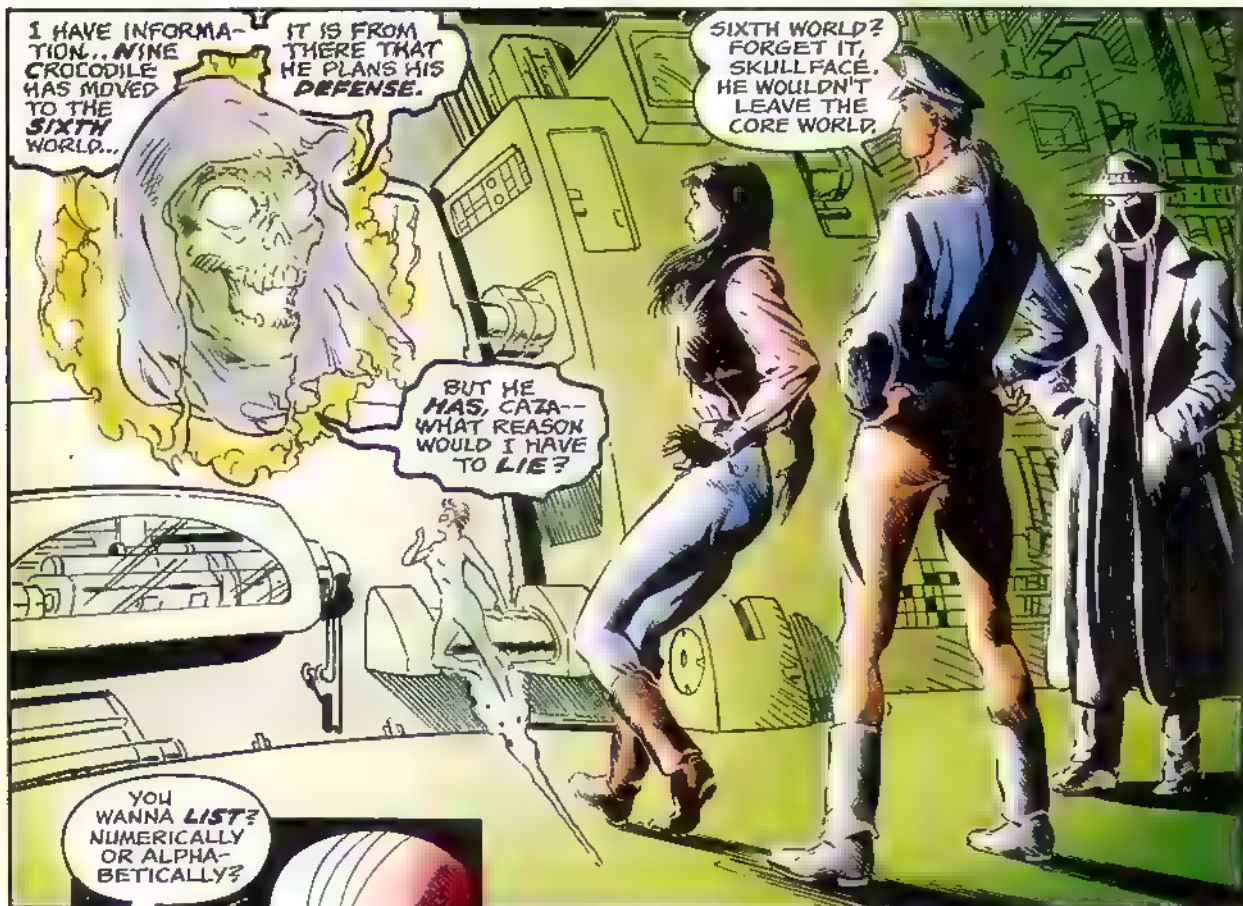
WHEN
ACTIVATED, THE
TEMPLES WILL
FOCUS THEIR
ENERGY
TOGETHER...

...MOVING
THROUGHOUT
THE TIME
STREAM...

...AND
ALL TIME...
FROM THE
FIRST SHOCK
OF LIGHT TO
ITS FINAL
SILENT
MURMUR...



...WILL
IMPLODE.



I HAVE INFORMATION... **NINE CROCODILE** HAS MOVED TO THE **SIXTH WORLD**...

IT IS FROM THERE THAT HE PLANS HIS DEFENSE.

SIXTH WORLD? FORGET IT, **SKULLFACE**. HE WOULDN'T LEAVE THE CORE WORLD.

BUT HE **HAS**, CAZA-- WHAT REASON WOULD I HAVE TO LIE?

YOU WANNA **LIST**? NUMERICALLY OR ALPHABETICALLY?

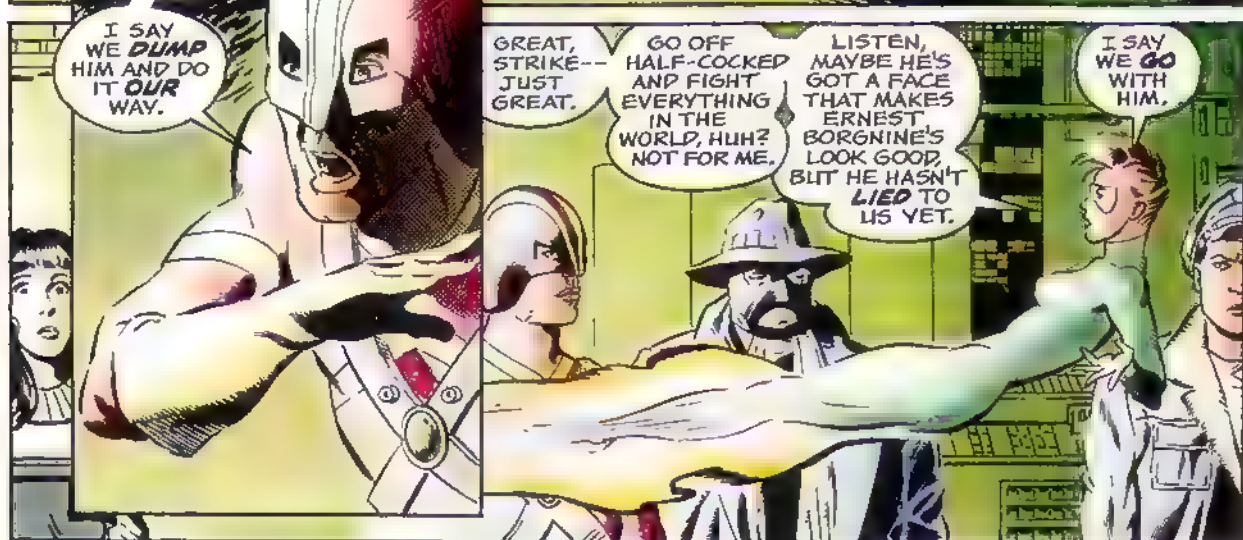
I SAY WE **DUMP** HIM AND DO IT **OUR** WAY.

GREAT, STRIKE-- JUST GREAT.

GO OFF HALF-CKOCKED AND FIGHT EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD, HUH? NOT FOR ME.

LISTEN, MAYBE HE'S GOT A FACE THAT MAKES **ERNEST BORGNINE'S** LOOK GOOD, BUT HE HASN'T **LIED** TO US YET.

I SAY WE **GO** WITH HIM.

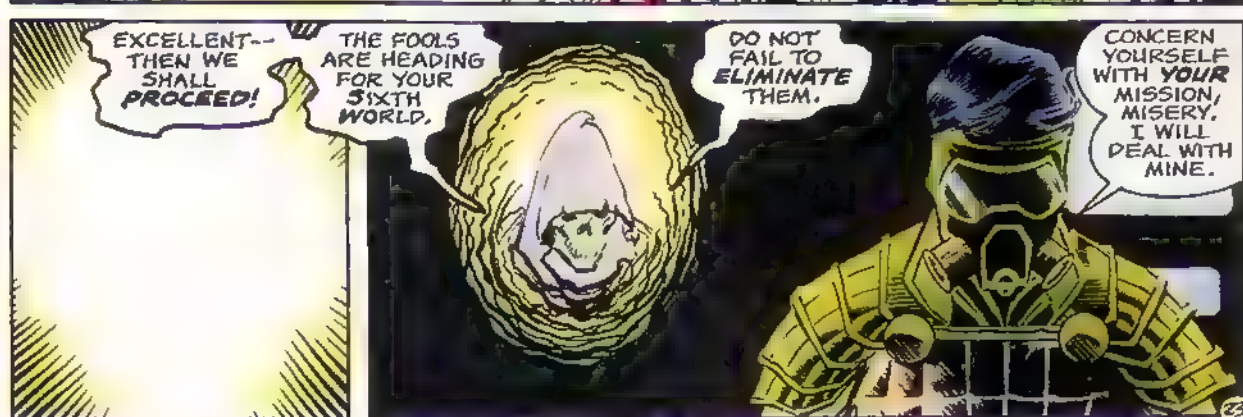


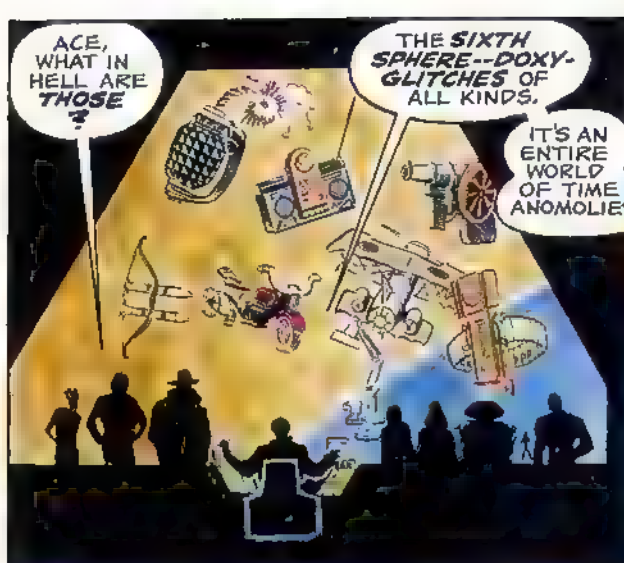
EXCELLENT-- THEN WE SHALL **PROCEED**!

THE FOOLS ARE HEADING FOR YOUR **SIXTH WORLD**.

DO NOT FAIL TO **ELIMINATE** THEM.

CONCERN YOURSELF WITH **YOUR** MISSION, MISERY. I WILL DEAL WITH **MINE**.

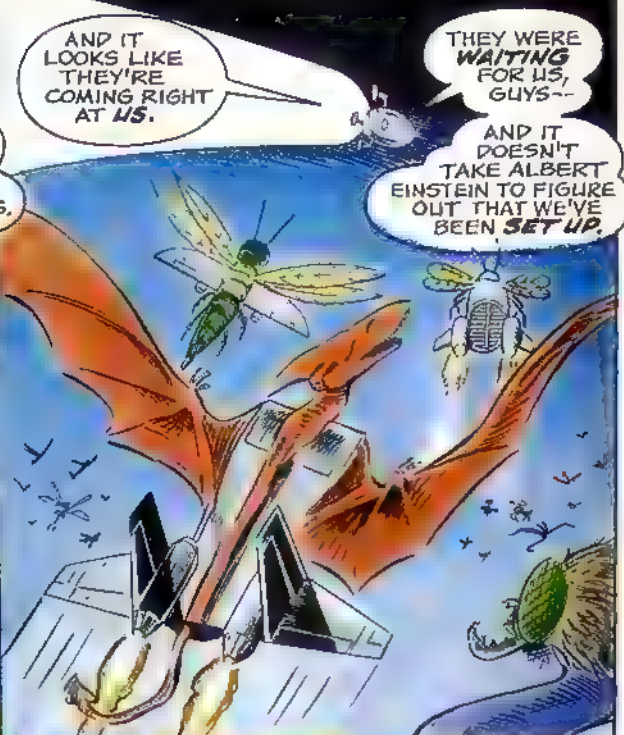




ACE,
WHAT IN
HELL ARE
THOSE
?

THE **SIXTH**
SPHERE--DOXY-
GLITCHES OF
ALL KINDS.

IT'S AN
ENTIRE
WORLD
OF TIME
ANOMOLIES.



AND IT
LOOKS LIKE
THEY'RE
COMING RIGHT
AT US.

THEY WERE
WAITING
FOR US,
GUYS--

AND IT
DOESN'T
TAKE ALBERT
EINSTEIN TO FIGURE
OUT THAT WE'VE
BEEN **SET UP**.



MISERY'S
SPOTS REMAIN
AS WELL-
DEFINED AS
EVER.

VERY WELL--
HE MUST BE
DEALT
WITH.

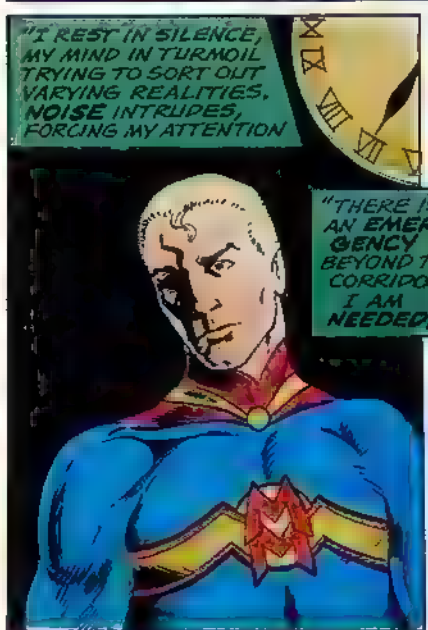
CROC
MUST'VE
GOTTEN
TO HIM.

DAMMIT
--HOW DO
WE GET OUT
OF **THIS?**



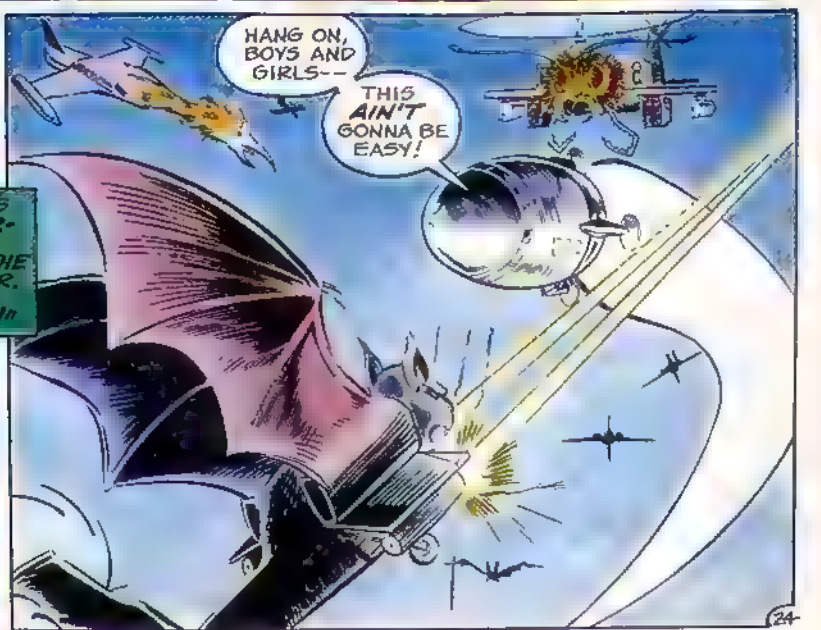
OKAY, MISERY--
LAUGH UP YOUR
DAMN CLOAK
NOW, 'CAUSE
IF I EVER
GET MY MITTS
ON YOU--

--I SWEAR
TO GOD I'LL
BREAK YOUR
SCRAWNY
NECK.



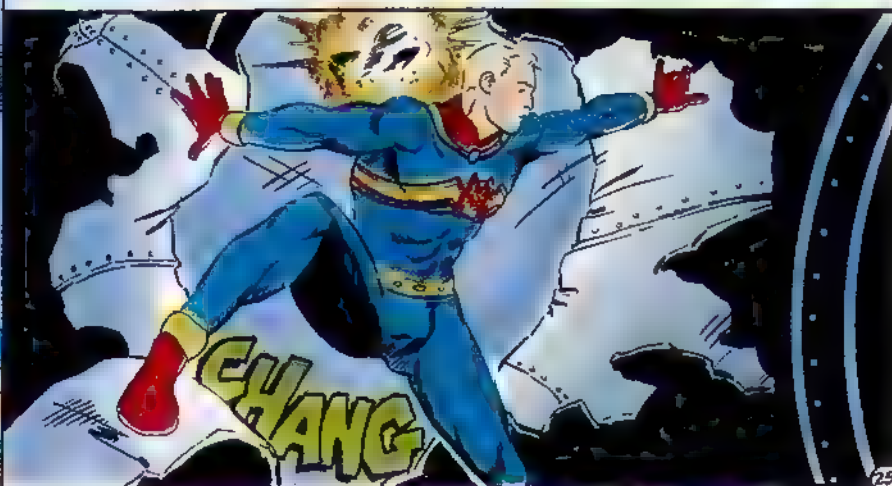
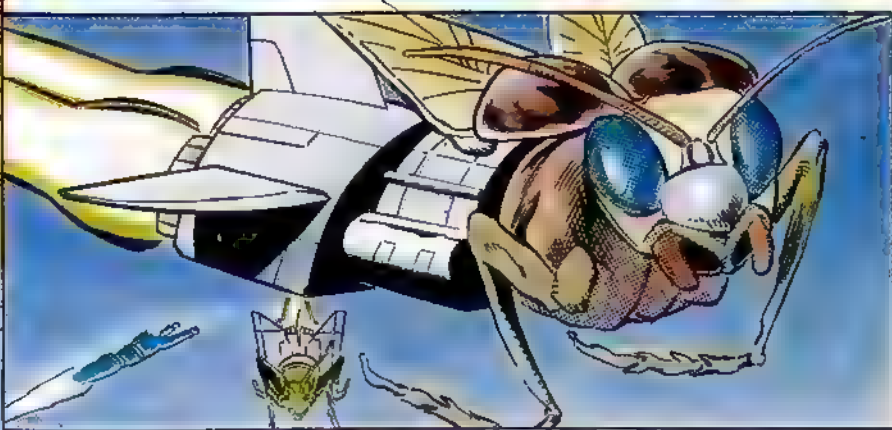
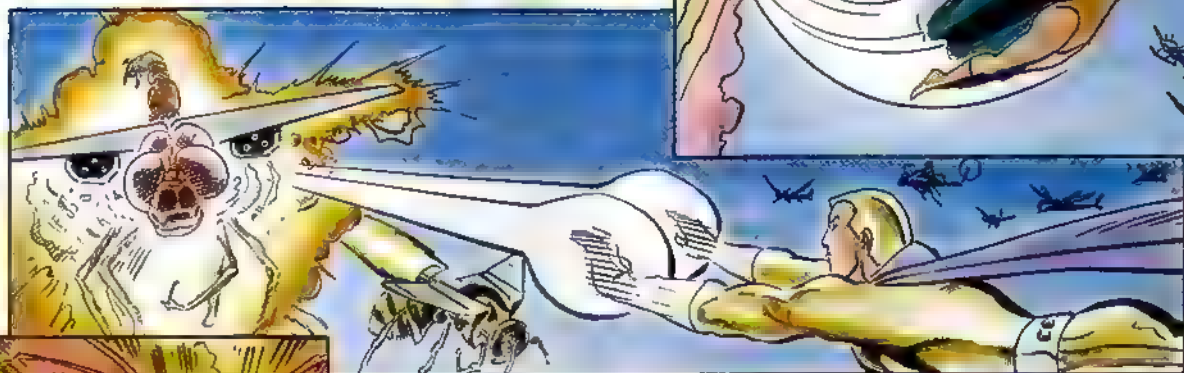
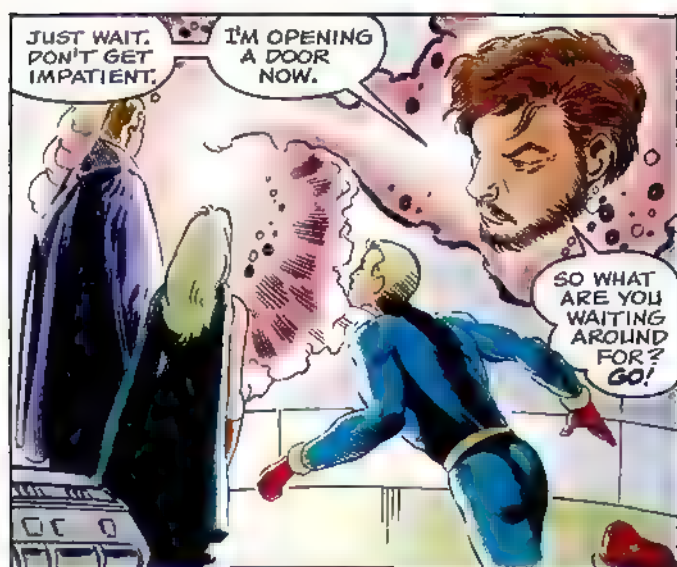
"I REST IN SILENCE,
MY MIND IN TURMOIL
TRYING TO SORT OUT
VARYING REALITIES.
NOISE INTRUDES,
FORCING MY ATTENTION

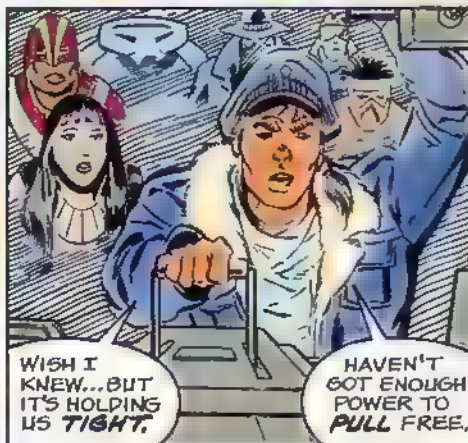
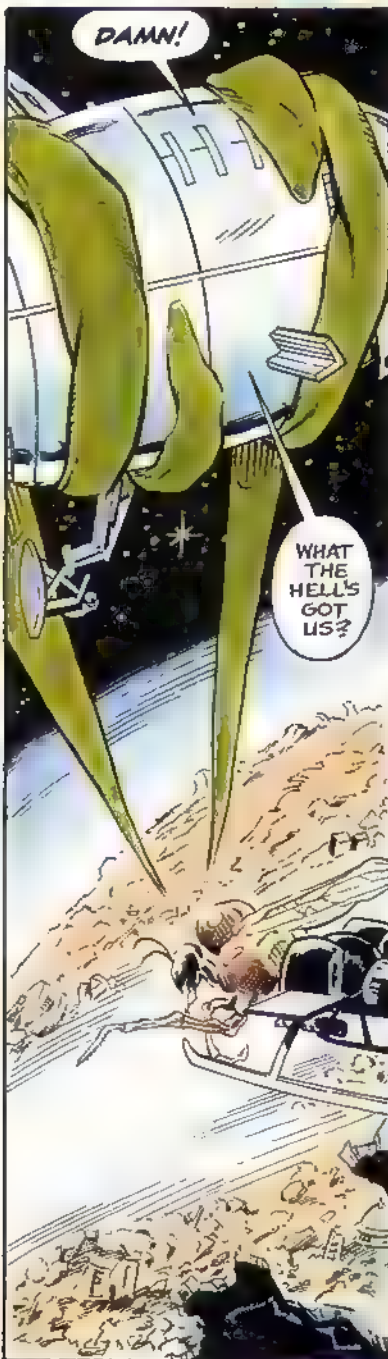
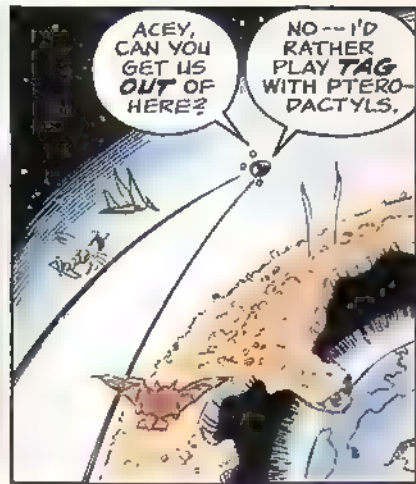
"THERE IS
AN EMER-
GENCY
BEYOND THE
CORRIDOR.
I AM
NEEDED!"

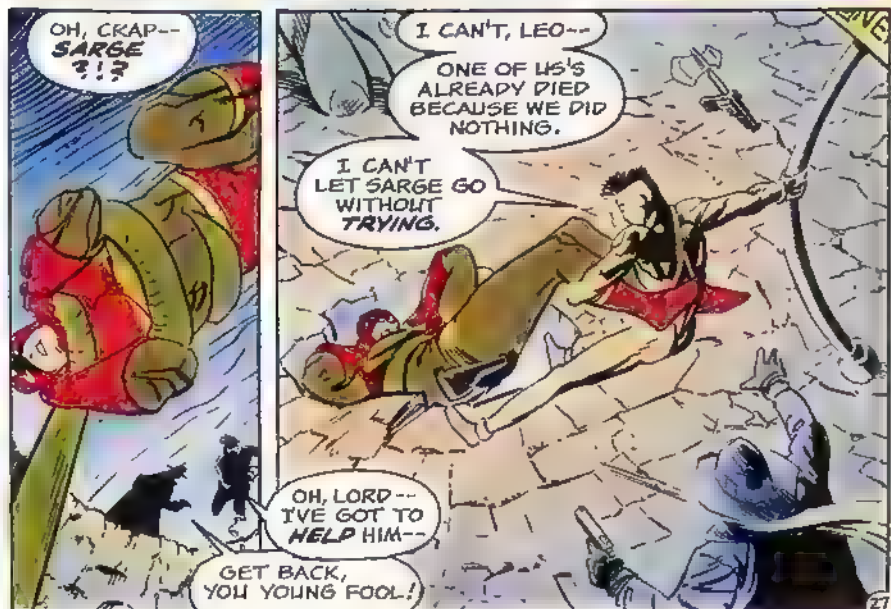
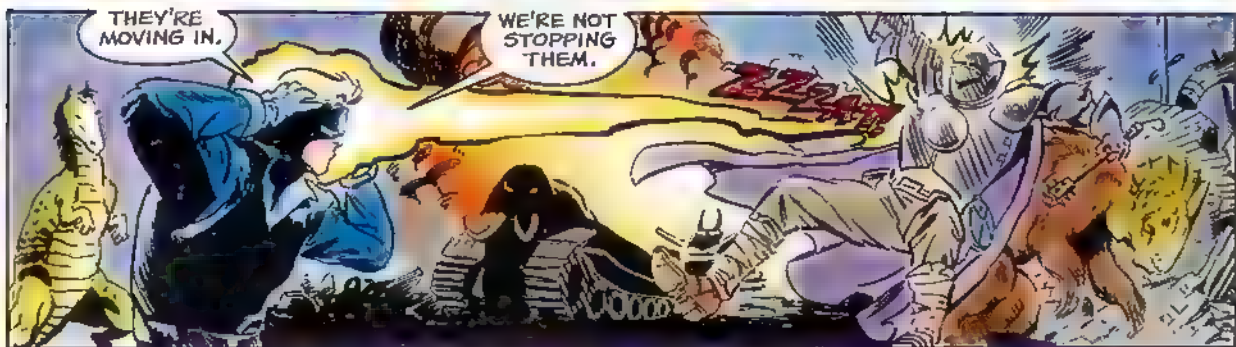


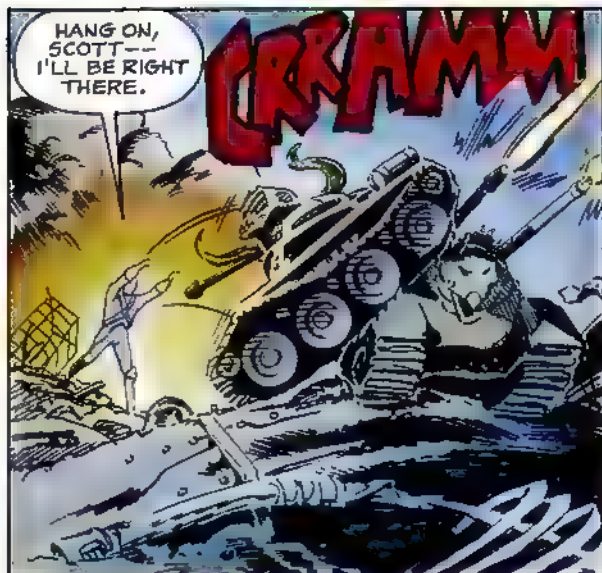
HANG ON,
BOYS AND
GIRLS--

THIS
AIN'T
GONNA BE
EASY!









HANG ON,
SCOTT--
I'LL BE RIGHT
THERE.

CRAMMM



STOP SQUIRMING, YOU FOOLS.
LET ME GET A BEAD ON HIM.

I--I
CAN'T DO IT...
TOO HARD...
TOO HARD...

I'M
COMIN', MAN--
HOLD ON. DON'T
GIVE UP. DON'T
GIVE UP!



AGGGHHHHH!

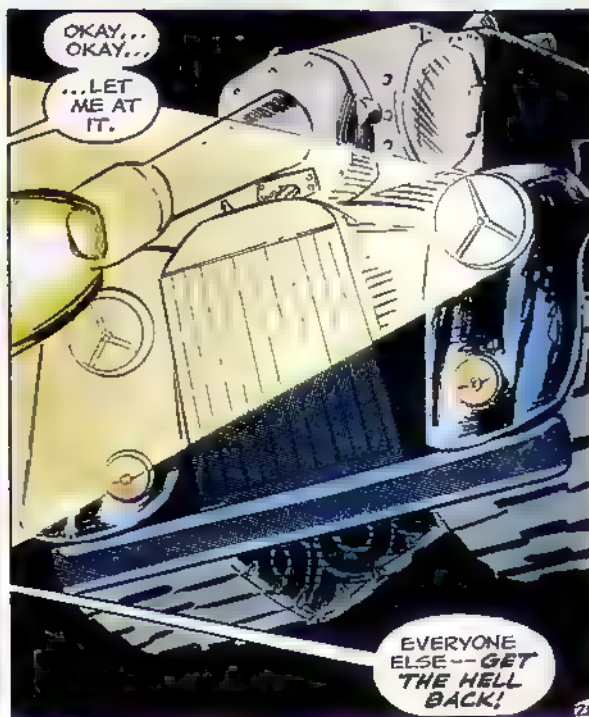
DENNIS
?!?

RACKK!



UNHHH--
I'M OKAY...
JUST A
FLESH
WOUND.

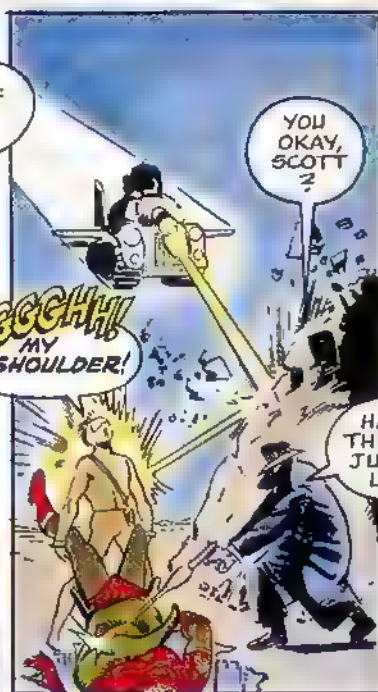
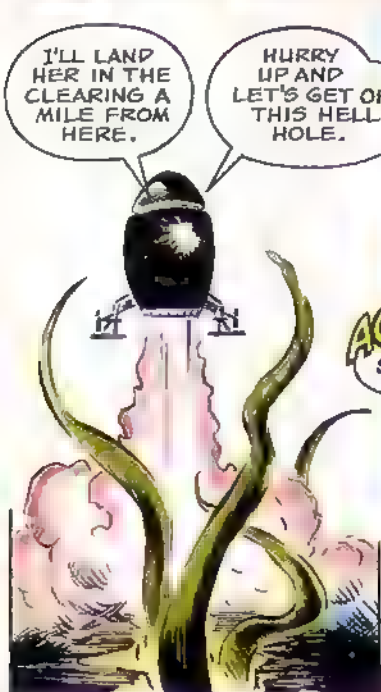
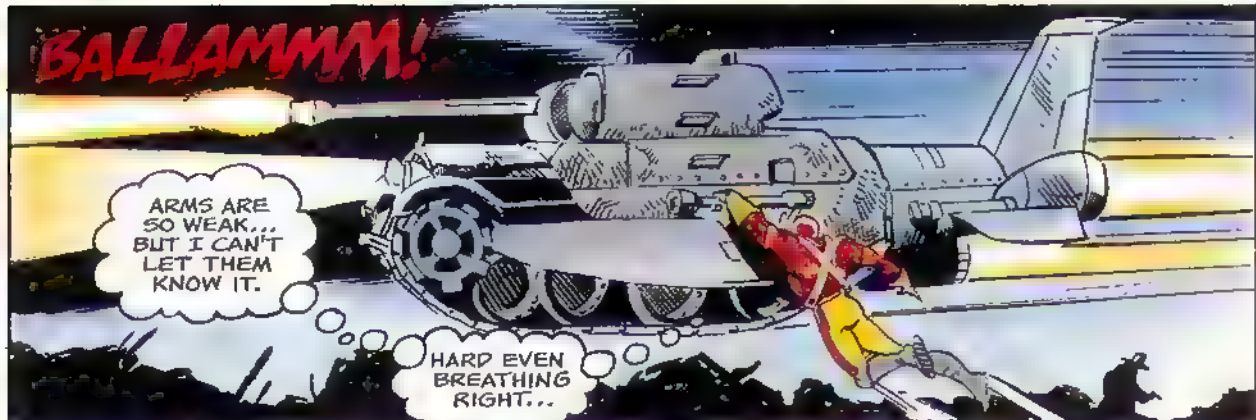
NEED A
MOMENT
TO CLEAR
MY HEAD.

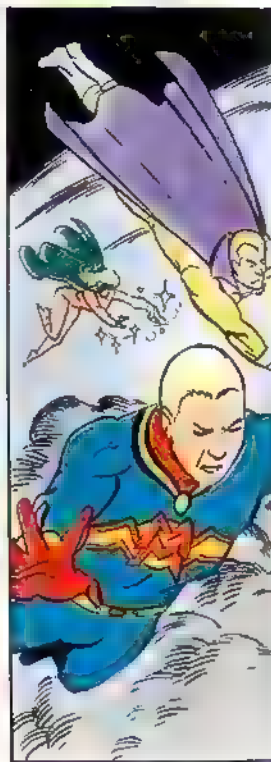
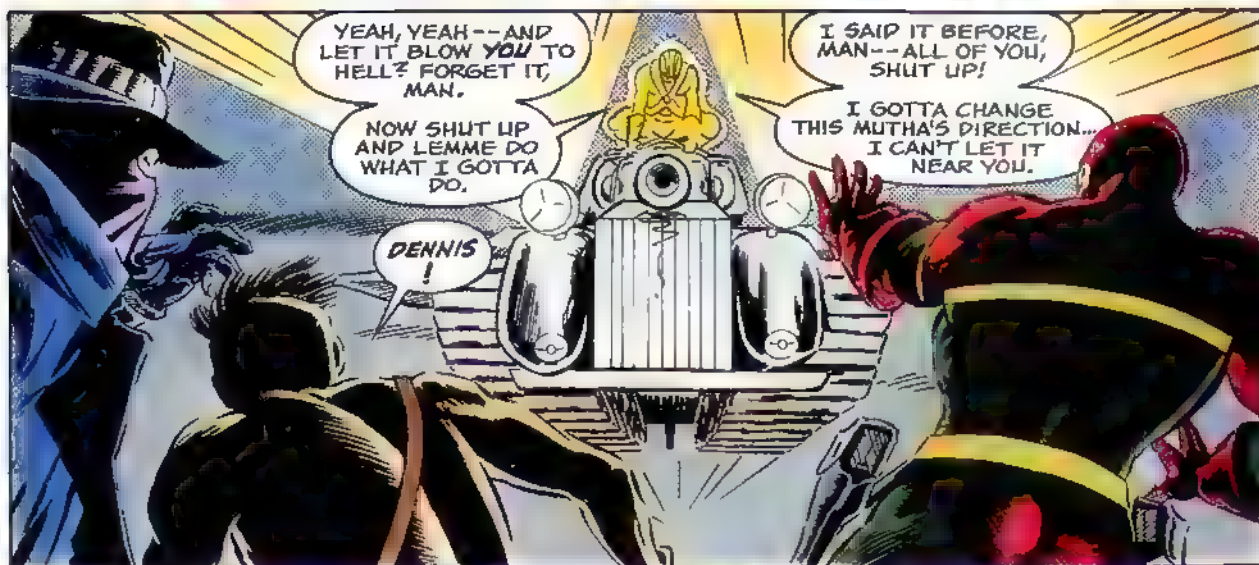
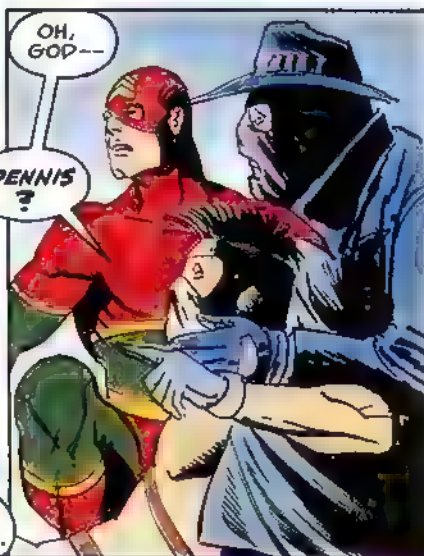


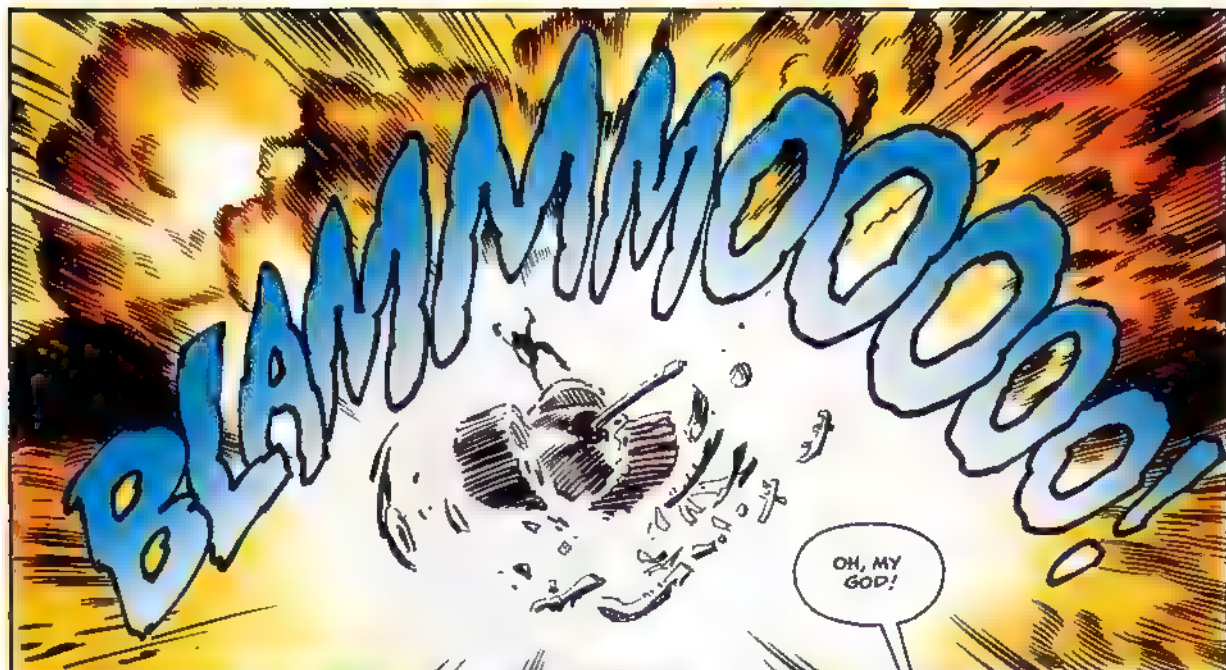
OKAY...
OKAY...

...LET
ME AT
IT.

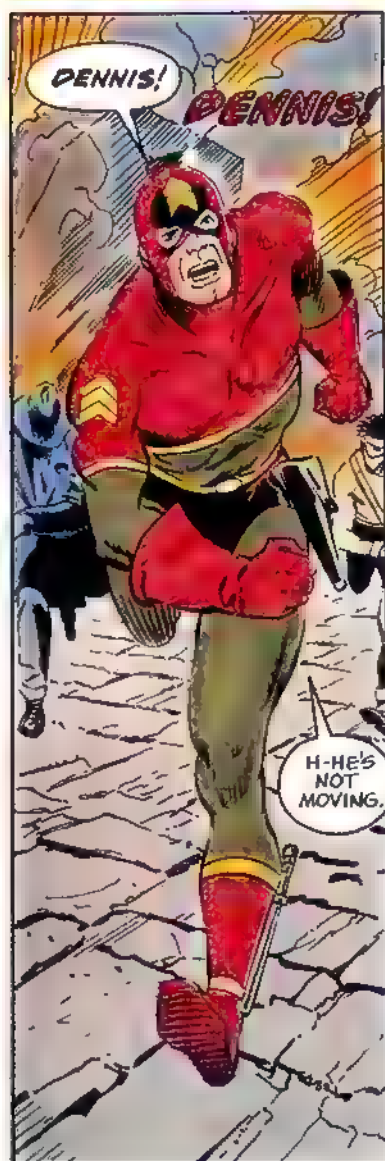
EVERYONE
ELSE--
GET
THE HELL
BACK!







OH, MY
GOD!



DENNIS!

DENNIS!

H-HE'S
NOT
MOVING.

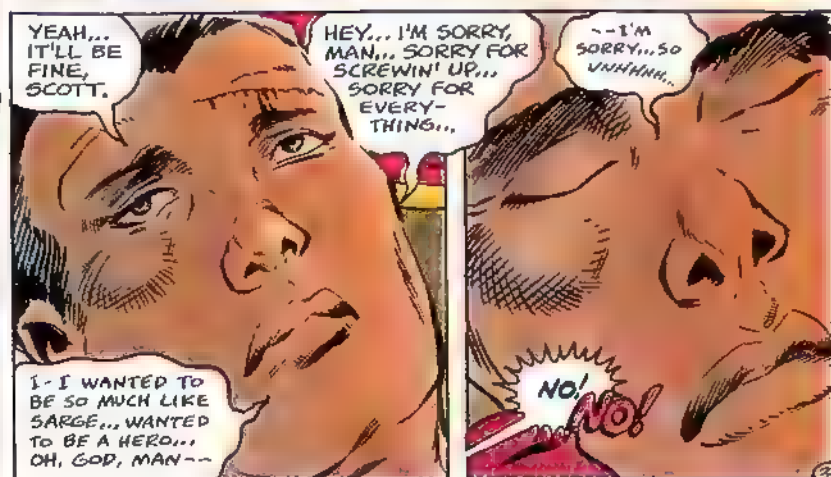


HOW
IS THE
BOY?

HE
SAVED US,
YOU KNOW.

C'MON
DENNIS--
IT'LL BE
OKAY.

TELL ME
YOU'LL BE
OKAY.



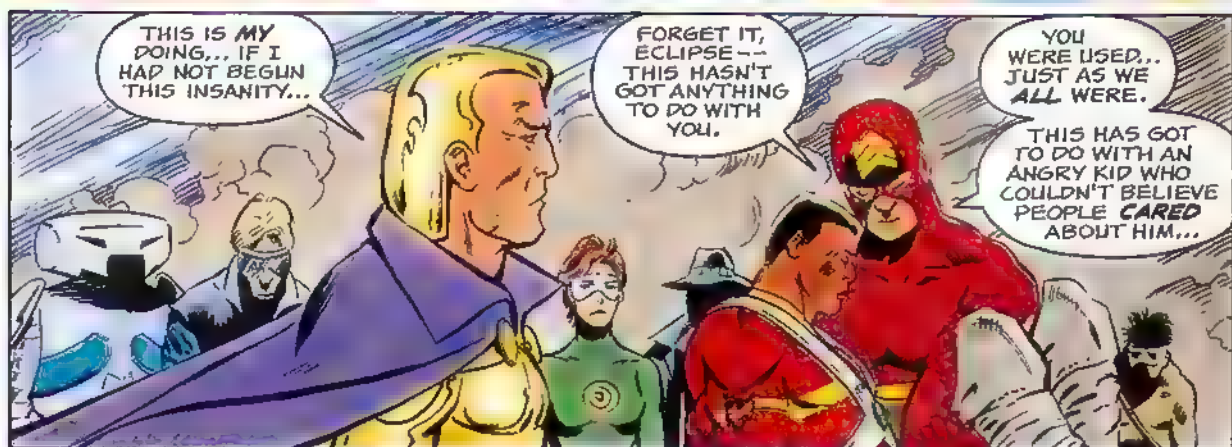
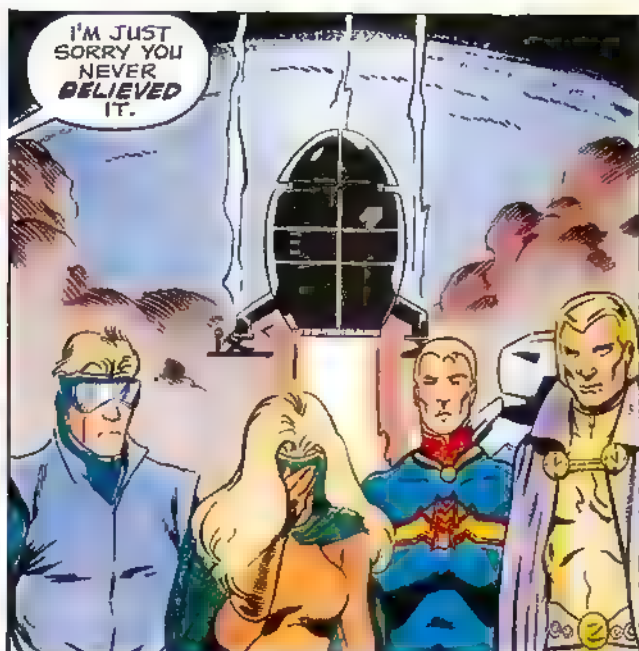
YEAH...
IT'LL BE
FINE,
SCOTT.

HEY... I'M SORRY,
MAN... SORRY FOR
SCREWIN' UP...
SORRY FOR
EVERY-
THING...

-- I'M
SORRY... SO
UNNNNN...

I- I WANTED TO
BE SO MUCH LIKE
SARGE... WANTED
TO BE A HERO...
OH, GOD, MAN--

NO!
NO!



NEXT ISSUE: FINAL ECLIPSE!

California, Here I Come!

When Cat Yronwode and I joined forces in December 1981, we put our heads together to decide where to relocate Eclipse. I've always been a great admirer of Al Jolson, and Cat is a San Francisco native, so California it was. My brother Jan remained in New York, holding down the economic front. Before we could make the final move, though, there was a brief stay in Willow Springs, Missouri, Cat's home at the time. Some previous personal obligations then led us, for ten months, to situate Eclipse's editorial office in America's heartland, Columbia, Missouri.

It was while we were in Columbia that Mark Evanier entered our lives on a permanent basis. Mark co-edited the **Destroyer Duck** benefit comic book in 1981 (where, coincidentally enough, **Groo** made his first appearance), but our direct dealings with him had been limited.

Now, everybody knows Mark Evanier. Not only is he the co-creator of such stalwart heroes as **Crossfire** and **The DNAgents** (all of whom will be back soon enough, I promise), but he "translates" **Groo** for Sergio Aragones, writes more television shows than I could list in the four pages allotted me here, and on top of it all, is the secret scripter of some of your favorite newspaper comic strips.

It's been suggested that, like Will Rogers, Mark has never met a person he didn't like. He says there's one exception, but I'm not telling who that person might be, although I think many of you can guess!

At any rate, Mark and Will Meugniot came to us, through their agent Mike Friedrich of Star*Reach, with a proposal for a superhero team. We had never previously published a superhero team series. It wasn't that we didn't want to, but rather that we were more interested in publishing the kind of material other companies were not offering. **The DNAgents**, however, struck us as a unique, solid concept.

Upon visiting Mark's Los Angeles home for the first time, what stuck in my mind most was not necessarily the walls stacked with books, comics, videotapes, and records, nor the juke box and pin-ball machine in the living room, nor the priceless original comics art all over the place, nor the beautiful 1920s



by Dean Mullaney

tiles throughout the house. No, what I remember most was a small collection of figural magnets on Mark's refrigerator. You may laugh now, in 1988, because you can't go to a store these days without those damned magnets popping everywhere you look, but Mark's then-budding collection was my first encounter with this odd artifact. (Then again, Mark also had a plate of plastic spaghetti frozen in mid-air on his counter-top, so he obviously has a penchant for kitchen novelties!)

Over the years, I've seen Mark's refrigerator taken over by magnets representing every conceivable object, from a miniature piece of chocolate cake to a tiny Garfield. Mark claims that he doesn't buy the magnets. He says that people just give him magnets when they come to visit (and in fact, Cat and I are guilty of adding to his collection), but for some reason, I have this vision of Mark going down to the local convenience store at two in the morning to buy the latest variety. After all, I'm sure that like any other collectible, each new piece is only in distribution for a limited time. It's not too far a leap of imagination to picture Mark sitting in his car, hour after hour, night after night, waiting for the distributor's truck; before long, he's forgotten to shave, his diet consists only of corn chips brought by that same truck, and eventually he hijacks the truck wanting more, more, more...magnets.

Gee, it could almost be one of Mark's *Crossfire* plots!

Until we hooked up with Mark, it had been our editorial stance to publish comics aimed at fans older than those reading traditional newsstand comics. We realized that if *Eclipse* was going to expand—which we wanted it to do—we needed to start attracting readers as an earlier age. We made a very conscious decision to begin offering different comics for different age groups, not, as some publishers have tried, to make every comic book all things to all people. That, we knew, didn't work. It was philosophies such as those that created comics aimed at the lowest common denominator.

It was at this time that Cat eased out of her other writing and freelance editorial jobs and began assuming more and more of the editorial duties at *Eclipse*. As the business grew, so did our need for strong editorial guidance. I'm not ashamed to say that she's a better editor than I am. She is, and it was her interest in color and knowledge of printing that was largely responsible for what was to come.

With the publication of *The DNAgents* we entered our first expansion period. Simultaneously, we introduced *Eclipse Monthly*, the color comic book replacement for *Eclipse Magazine*.

Some features made it into their own title, such as Max Collins' and Terry Beatty's *Ms. Tree* (now celebrating its 50th issue anniversary!), while others made the transition from the black-and-white magazine to color, notably Trina Robbins' adaptation of Sax Rohmer's "Dope", and an odd, upbeat non-costumed hero named *The Masked Man* by B.C. Boyer.

Actually, when B.C. first sent us his character as a blind submission in 1983, the series was called "White Collar Man." I suggested changing the name to "The Masked Man," feeling somewhat like Captain Joe Patterson of the *New York News* when he renamed Chester Gould's "Plainclothes Tracy" to "Dick Tracy." Aside from a full page illustration of hero Dick Carstairs and his sidekick, Barney McAllister, there was no other artwork included in the presentation. B.C. was too shy to pitch himself as a writer/artist to us. After seeing samples of his storytelling, however, Cat and I were convinced that this guy had what was necessary.

As we later found out, artistic talent runs in his family; his father, Charles Boyer (pronounced as an American name, not like the French actor's!), was the head scenic painter at Disneyland from the park's opening in 1954, and had been chosen to paint Walt Disney's official portrait!

B.C. is one of the nicest people we've ever met. He's actually as upbeat, as warm, (and yes, as naive), as his stories, and although many fans have compared his work to that of Will Eisner, B.C. Boyer had never seen



an Eisner Spirit story until long after he had created *The Masked Man*. When Cat showed him Eisner's stuff, he was naturally impressed. In an age of cynicism and extreme violence, Bruce is a very welcome sight. He's also a great practical joker. If you're ever at the yearly San Diego Comics Convention, try to catch him there.

Speaking of Will Eisner, we were excited when Cat located an unpublished Eisner comic book from 1948 in Will's vault—and really thrilled when Will gave us permission to print it, at long last. The convoluted history of *John Law, Detective* is told in the April 1983 *Eclipse* comic, so I'll refer you there.

By this point, we were going full swing. *Destroyer Duck* was now a continuing series by Steve Gerber and Jack Kirby, the adventures of *Sabre* were presented by Don McGregor and Billy Graham, and we were very fortunate and proud to present Jerry Siegel's *The Starling* as the back-up series in *Destroyer Duck*.

In July 1983 it was finally time to make our long-planned move to California. Loading everything both of us owned into a 24-foot rental truck, we eased our way West until we couldn't go any farther, settling in the small Russian River town of Guerneville, deep among the redwoods, and only a few miles inland from the Pacific Ocean.

During the rest of 1983 Cat, Jan, and I plotted our 1984 schedule, which, looking back at it, still amazes me. In that year we introduced, among other things, Scott McCloud's *Zot!*, Doug Moench's *Aztec Ace*, and Marshall Rogers' *Cap'n Quick and a Foozle*. The color collection of Englehart and Rogers' *Coyote* marked our return to graphic novels, and we published our first trade paperback book, *Women and the Comics* by Cat and Trina Robbins (a book which, incidentally, will be available soon in a much needed revised edition).

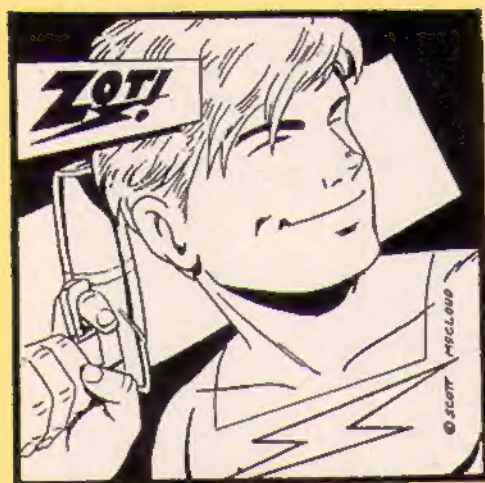
Doug Moench, as if you couldn't tell from his stories, is one of the most fascinating people in comics. Along with Cat and Denny O'Neil, he is a source of endless information and interesting conversation. In

any field of interest, you often encounter people who know little, if anything, about subjects beyond the scope of their specialty. Not so with Doug. After a visit to Doug and Debbie Moench's home for a weekend, you feel as though you've returned from a combination amusement park and library. During one visit, Doug, Cat and I played pinball on his nifty-keen machine for hours on end, while discussing everything from ancient Mayan ruins to the legacy of Aleister Crowley.

Doug's a guy after my own heart. He'll find any excuse to buy a book on a new subject. For the initial run of *Aztec Ace*, Doug, Cat, and I must have collectively spent thousands of dollars buying books which we justified as "research." It got to the point where Doug's bookcases kept growing upward and upward, while Cat and I filled an entire shed with bound paper products. Unfortunately for Cat and I, the Guerneville flood that turned our town into one giant swimming pool in early 1986 also swept that shed away. Doug, luckily, still has his library. The last time I was there, Doug was threatening his neighbors with a skyscraper-like addition to house his collection! I've got this sneaking suspicion that the upcoming return of *Aztec Ace* will spawn a new "research" spree by all of us!

Whereas I had known Doug for many years before we started *Aztec Ace*, Scott McCloud came to us through a blind mail submission, just as had B.C. Boyer. We receive an incredible number of submissions every week, and while there are many people with promise among them, it's rare to find an unknown with talents and foresight as maturely developed as was Scott's when he came to us with *Zot!*.

Scott was only 22 when we met him, and he had just completed 14 months in DC's production department. He had been developing *Zot!* for quite some time and pitched it to the publishers who would allow him to retain the copyright ownership. Cat and I decided we wanted to publish *Zot!* before we even finished reading the proposal. In preparing for a two-



Zot! TM and © 1988 Scott McCloud

volume collection of the ten-issue color run of *Zot!*, I went back and reread them, and while I knew how it ended, Scott still managed to take me through every possible emotion along the way. I hope it doesn't sound like a bunch of hype, but I honestly believe *Zot!* to be one of the highest achievements in comics history, and Scott one of our great treasures.

In late 1984, the comics industry experienced an incredible crash. Never mind the reasons for it—let's just say one of the larger players in the field didn't like sharing the market with "upstarts" like *Eclipse*, *Pacific Comics*, and others. One of the major results of this crash was the demise of *Pacific Comics* of San Diego, run by Bill and Steve Schanes. Rumors of *Pacific's* imminent demise were circulating for months, and when the call came in September that they had closed their doors, I immediately phoned Steve Schanes and negotiated for *Eclipse* to purchase most of *Pacific's* titles. I flew down that day, checkbook in hand. I stopped off in Los Angeles first, met with Dave Stevens and signed a contract for *The Rocketeer*, and proceeded to San Diego. Two days later, I was on a plane back to San Francisco with color negatives for, among other projects, *Groo*, *Mz. Monster*, *Strange Days*, *Axel Pressbutton*, *Siegel & Shuster: Dateline 1930s*, and *Somerset Holmes*. Steve Schanes and his wife Ann Fera were very gracious hosts during my brief stay.

We guaranteed payment to all of *Pacific's* writers and artists, and, by November, we had half a dozen former *Pacific* titles added to our line-up!

By February, we had firmed up plans to publish the final issues of the Bruce Jones/April Campbell titles *Twisted Tales* and *Alien Worlds* originally designed for *Pacific*. Since *Eclipse* was much smaller then than it is now, we just didn't have the resources to swallow an entire other company's output at once. One of the interesting untold stories from that period has to do with some heavy-duty music industry people who invested in *Twisted Tales*. Jan casually mentioned to some of his fellow musicians that we wanted to assume publication of more *Pacific* titles but didn't have the resources. Surprisingly enough, some

of them turned out to be big comics fans in addition to being rock stars. They wanted to test the waters for jumping into the comics industry and so we formed a trial company with them, called *Independent Comics Group*, to publish *Twisted Tales*.

To make a long story short, while *Twisted Tales* proved successful, these musicians soon had new tours starting, and after a while their dreams of becoming comics impresarios gave way to the more glamorous prospect of remaining rock stars, while keeping comics as their hobby.

Around this time we realized that we needed more people on staff (no kidding!). Various interns were working at *Eclipse* during this period, but none turned out to be permanently interested...or qualified. That is, until Sean Deming walked through the door.

Sean began as an intern in February 1985, and if you read Cat's editorials from that time, you'll learn that Sean got a full-time position because he was the only one in the office who could find the "hidden" electrical sockets. Actually, he had a lot more in his resumé than that. Sean's one of the few people I've ever met who can think, react, and move as fast as Cat and I can under pressure. In a deadline business like comics, that's an attribute above most others. So what if he needs the computer's spell-checker to make his documents readable?—so do many writers in the field! Seriously, most of us in the comics industry are here because we love comics and enjoy putting them together. In a small, closely-knit office like ours, it's particularly important that everyone not only get along, but genuinely like each other. I can't think of many people I've met in the last five years whom I like as much as Sean. He also has more patience than any of us here and plays convincing psychopaths in local plays to boot!

Next Issue: the staff expands again as Bruce Palley joins the inner sanctum, and we have Editors Up the Kazoo! Plus the coming of Miracleman, Scout, and Airboy—and the return of the Independent Comics Group—in the next and final chapter in this series on Eclipse's first ten years.

WHO'S WHO IN TOTAL ECLIPSE



Dr. Eclipse The immortal Zzed was struck by a diluted cosmic ray which, instead of killing him, gave him great power.

The evil scientist Emil Gargunza twisted Mike Moran's life to suit his own needs. It backfired.

Miracleman



Aztec Ace In his Azure Crosstime Express, Caza crosses time and space to keep the past safe from the future.

Aztec Ace's arch enemy would destroy time itself to rule his limbo in peace.

Nine-Crocodile



Bridget Stolen from 1940, Bridget Kronopoulous crowned herself queen of Egypt and now accompanies Aztec Ace in his battles.

Ace's former lab assistant now finds himself with no body—and with the implanted persona of Sigmund Freud in his 23rd century brain.

Head



Black Terror Orrin Murphy fights crime on a corrupt world where Al Capone is the vice-president of the U.S.

Air Fighter Ronald Britain almost died in an accident, but advanced Nelson Aviation cyborg armor allows him to continue life.

Iron Ace



Hirota David Nelson II's first WWII "kill," Japanese ace Saburo Hirota went on to become a trusted friend and tutor for the young Davy Nelson.

A mute Bogantillan freedom fighter, Marisa Ortega salvaged an old chopper of Skywolves and now emulates him.

La Lupina



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Rebirth

It comes when least expected, snatching the immortal Zzed from his long-awaited suicide. The death beam with the power to destroy both Zzed and the universe has been intercepted by Tachyon, who vanished in a blinding flash.

Now the remains of that cosmic energy have found their intended target, and Zzed bathes in the agonizing glow, screaming. Our heroes can only watch and wait as the stunning transformation takes place.

Zzed is no more.

In his place is a new being, Dr. Eclipse, blessed with the knowledge and power of untold galaxies. But there is still a grave danger: Nine-Crocodile's temple machinery threatens the very fabric of time itself. Yet another hero must die if the universe is to be saved. Billions of lives hang in the balance.

Total Eclipse

It's Eclipse Comics' Tenth Anniversary. In this and future issues, you'll encounter Airboy, Valkyrie, Skywolf, Miracleman, The Prowler, Strike, the Heap, Aztec Ace and virtually every star from Eclipse's first decade of innovative comics publishing.

Marv Wolfman, writer, is the author of *The New Teen Titans*, *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, *Tomb of Dracula*, and countless other acclaimed comic books. The Zzed saga is his most intricate plot to date.

Bo Hampton, pencil artist, is well-known for his detailed linework and powerful layouts in books such as *Airboy*, *Lost Planet*, *Luger*, and *The New Mutants*. *Total Eclipse* is a new peak in his artistic development.

Rick Bryant, ink artist, has graced the pages of *Miracleman*, *Marvel Fanfare*, *Moon Knight*, and *World of Krypton*. In *Total Eclipse*, he perfectly complements Hampton's detail with his own dynamic style.

ECLIPSE  BOOKS™

